

T H E  
W O R K S

Of the Learned

Isaac Barrow, D. D.

Late MASTER of *Trinity-College* in *Cambridge*.

PUBLISHED

By his Grace Dr. *JOHN TILLOTSON*,  
Late Arch-Bishop of *CANTERBURY*.

The Third Volume,

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Forty Five S E R M O N S, upon several Occasions.  
Compleating his English W O R K S.

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WORKS

Isaac Barrow, D.D.

Late Master of Trinity College in Cambridge

By his Grace Dr. JOHN VILLOTSON  
Late Arch-Bishop of Canterbury

The Third Volume

Containing Forty Five SERMONS  
and several WORKS



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TO  
Her Royal Highness  
THE  
PRINCESS  
ANNE  
OF  
DENMARK,

THOMAS BARROW,

The Author's Father,

Humbly Dedicateth these

SERMONS.



Her Royal Highness

PRINCESS

ALICE

DEINMARK

THOMAS ARK

The Author's Father

Illegible text

ERMORS



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1682.

C. Alston, R. P. D. Hen. Episc.  
Lond. a Sacris.



SERMON



## VOL. III.

## SERMON I.

## Of Doing all in the Name of Christ.

COLOSS. iii. 17.

*And whatsoever ye do in word, or in deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus.*

**W**Hatsoever ye do in word, or deed: A Duty we see the Apostle injoins us of a large extent, and therefore surely of a great Importance; indeed of an universal concernment; such as must go along with, must run through all our Words and all our Actions. We are therefore much obliged, and much concerned to attend thereto, and to practise it carefully. But first we must understand what it is; the doing whereof depends upon understanding the sense of that phrase (*doing in the name of Jesus*) being somewhat ambiguous, and capable of divers meanings; which both in common use, and in H. Scripture we find it to bear different, according to the variety of matters or occasions to which it is applyed; most of which are comprehended, and (as it were) complicated in that general one, according to which we may be said to do that in another person's name, which we do with any kind of reference or regard to him; such as our relations, or our obligations to that person do require; and the particular nature of the action doth admit. And according to this acception I conceive it safest and best to interpret Saint Paul's meaning here, supposing it to comprehend all the more special, and restrained meanings of this phrase, truly applicable to the present matter; of which meanings I shall endeavour in order to propound the chief; and together, both to unfold and to inculcate the several respective branches of this duty. Yet first of all rejecting one or two, which cannot well be applied to this purpose.

To do in another's name, doth sometimes denote the assuming another's Person, or pretending to be the same with him, the very He. So, *many shall come in my name*, (Prophefied our Saviour) *saying, I am Christ*: To do thus in Jesus his Name, is the part of an Antichrist, and an Impostor. That sense therefore hath nothing to do here.

Again; to do in another's Name, doth often imply doing *alterius loco*, or *vice*; in another's Name, or stead, as a deputy, or substitute; representing the Person, or supplying the office of another. So did the Prophets *come, and speak in God's Name*; what they declared, or enjoined, being therefore said to be declared, and enjoined by God himself: *I speak unto you, rising up early, and speaking*, (*viz.* by the Prophets, whom he sent, and who are said to come and speak in his Name.) And thus the Apostles spake in Christ's Name: *We are Ambassadors for Christ; we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled*. Thus also Princes govern, and Magistrates execute Justice in God's Name; whence they are stiled *Gods*, as being his Lieutenants, administering that Judgment, which belongs originally and principally to him. Now for this sense, neither



is it so proper, or convenient here; it agreeing only to some particular Persons, and to some peculiar Actions of them; insomuch, that others presuming to act, according to that manner or kind, in *Jesus* his Name, shall thereby become usurpers and deceivers. We (and to us all this Precept is directed) shall heinously transgress our duty, doing any thing thus in his Name, without his Letters of Credence; without being specially called or sent; or being duly by him authorized thereto.

These, and such like senses the present matter doth not well admit; the rest that suit thereto I shall with some distinction in order represent.

I. To do in another's Name sometimes doth signify to do it out of affection or honour to another; for another's sake, because we love, or esteem him; *ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι* being equivalent to *ἐνεκα τοῦ ὀνόματος*, and *διὰ τὸ ὄνομα*. Thus it is said, *Whosoever shall give you a cup of Water to drink in my name; because ye are Christ's* (is added by way of interpretation, that is, out of respect to Christ, because of your relation to him) *shall not lose his reward*. And thus surely we ought to do every thing in *Jesus* his Name; all our Actions ought to proceed from a principle of grateful love, and reverence towards our gracious Redeemer. Let all your Actions be done in Charity, saith the Apostle; if in Charity to our Neighbour, then much more in love to him, for whose sake we are especially bound to love our Neighbour. Upon any undertaking, or applying our selves to action, we should so reflect thereupon as to consider, whether that we are going about be apt to please him, and conducive to his honour; if so, remembering what he hath done and suffered for us, (what excellent Blessings he hath purchased for us, what exceeding Benefits he hath conferr'd upon us) we should out of love and respect to him readily perform it; but if it otherwise appear displeasing, or dishonourable to him, we should, from the same Principles, carefully decline it. The duty is certain, and the reason thereof evident; for inducement to the practice thereof observe St. Paul's example; who thus represents himself in the main imployment of his life, acting, *The love of Christ constrains us; judging this, that he died for all, that they who live might not live to themselves, but to him that died and rose for them*: The love of Christ, begot and maintained by a consideration of his great benefits conferr'd on him, was the spring that set St. Paul on work, that excited, and urged him forward to action. Thus doing, we shall do in *Jesus* his Name; but if we act out of love to our selves (to promote our own interests, to gratify our own desires, to procure Credit or Praise to our selves) we act only in our own Names, and for our own sakes; not in the Name, or for the sake of *Jesus*.

II. To do in another's Name implies doing (chiefly) for the interest, or advantage of another; upon another's behalf or accompt; as the servants, or factours of another. For, when the business is another's, and the fruit, or benefit emergent belong to another, he that prosecutes that business may well be, and is commonly supposed to act in that other's name. Thus our Saviour is in St. John's Gospel expressed *to come, to speak, to act in God's Name*; because he did God's business (the work which God gave him to accomplish) and entirely sought the glory of God, as he there himself often avouches and professes. And thus (in imitation of him) ought we also to do all things in his Name; remembering that we are not our own Men, but the Servants of *Jesus*, (Servants to him not only by nature, as to our Maker and Preserver; but by purchase, as to our Redeemer, who bought us with the greatest Price; and by compact also, we having freely undertaken his Service, and expecting wages from him) that we have therefore no business or imployment properly our own, but that all our business is (or should be) to serve him, and promote his glory; *Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we do all to the glory of our Lord*. Whatever I say, we do, we therefore should perform it with this formal reference, as it were, toward *Jesus*, as his Servants, from conscience of the duty we owe to him; with intention therein to serve him; in expectation of reward only from him. So doth St. Paul (in prosecution of this same Precept) beneath in this Chapter injoin us, that *whatever we do, we perform it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing (or considering) that from the Lord we shall receive the recompence of the inheritance; for that we serve the Lord Christ*. In like manner elsewhere he teaches us to do what we do not as pleasers

Comp.  
Mark. 9.  
41.  
Matt. 10.  
41.  
24. 9.  
19. 29.  
Matt. 18. 5.  
1 Cor. 16. 14.

φιλοτιμίαν  
ἐκ αὐτοῦ  
ἀποσκοποῦναι.  
1 Cor. 5. 9.  
14.  
1 Thess. 2. 6.  
Tit. 1. 11.  
1 Pet. 5. 2.  
Philip. 1. 15.  
Matt. 23. 5.

Joh. 7. 18. 8.  
54. 10. 25.  
5. 43. 36. 6.  
28. 9. 3. 4.  
1 Cor. 6. 19.  
7. 23.  
Heb. 9. 12.  
1 Pet. 1. 18.  
Rom. 14. 8. 9.

1 Cor. 10. 31.

Col. 3. 22. 23.



fers of men (not upon any inferiour accounts) but as Servants of Christ, Eph. 6. 6, 9. knowing and considering that we have a Master in Heaven. But,

III. Doing in another's Name imports frequently doing by the appointment and command, or by the commission and authority of another. *Ἐν ποῦ αὐτῶν* Act. 4. 7. *By what power, and in what name have ye done these things,* say the high Priests to the Apostles? that is, Who did appoint or authorize you to do thus? their answer was ready; *In the Name of Jesus*, who had sent, commissioned, and commanded them to Preach, and propagate that Doctrine. Joh. 5. 36, 37. 43. 14. 54. 17. 18. And thus we are also bound to do all things in the Name of *Jesus*, regulating all our Actions by his Law; conforming our whole Lives to his Will; acting, not only out of good Principles (Principles of Love and Conscience) but according to right Rules; the Rules of his Word and Example, which he hath declared, and prescribed to us: for what is done beside his Warrant and Will, cannot be rightly esteemed done in his Name; will not as so be avowed, or accepted by him; no unjust or impious action will be upon any terms countenance or patronize. It was once a famous saying, *All Mischief begins in Nomine Domini*; and much surely, more than one way, hath been done under the like Notion or Pretence; but this will not serve to excuse the doing of that, in the day of final reckoning for our actions. For, *there will be many* (we are taught) Matt. 7. 23. *that shall in that day by specious professions of having done this or that in Christ's Name, veil their transgressions, and their neglects of duty, saying, Lord, Lord, have we not in thy Name prophesied; and in thy Name cast out Devils, and in thy Name done many wonderful things?* who yet, our Lord himself assures us, shall have this reply made to them, *I never knew you, depart from me ye workers of iniquity.* Luc. 13. 26. There will be those that shall claim acquaintance with Christ in such terms: *Lord, we have eaten and drank before thee; and thou hast taught in our Streets;* whom yet, our Lord will disclaim with a *Depart ye from me, all ye workers of iniquity*: 'Tis not, we see, Propheying in Christ's Name (or Preaching about him) nor frequent attendance upon those who do so; nor speaking much or hearing much concerning him; 'tis not having great gifts or endowments conferr'd by Christ (not even so great as that of working Miracles); 'tis not familiar converse with Christ, or making frequent addressees to him, that can sanctify all a Man's actions, or so entitle them to the Name of Christ, as to secure his Person from being disavowed and rejected by Christ; 'tis only the conforming all our Actions to his holy Laws, that can assure us to be acknowledged and accepted by him. This I could wish they would consider, who seem, by such pretences, to commend, or excuse their actions, although otherwise irregular and plainly contrary to the laws of Christ; such as those of being meek and charitable toward all Men; living peaceably our selves, and endeavouring to promote Peace among others; abstaining from rash and hard censures; from reviling and defaming others; paying reverence and obedience to Superiours; and the like Laws of Christ, not only exprefs and manifest, but even of the highest rank and consequence among them; being mainly conducing to that which our Lord especially tenders, the publick welfare and benefit of Mankind; the violation whereof cannot be justified by pretending any special regard whatever to Christ, or any collateral performance done, whether truly or seemingly, in his Name. We do but deceive our selves, if we conceit, that because we think much, or speak much of *Jesus*; or have a zeal for something good, all our actions are done in his Name; No, it only can be justly impressed upon, can warrant and sanctify actions truly good and agreeable to his Law; it were an abuse and forgery to do it, like stamping the King's Name (or Image) on counterfeit metal; upon brass or tin, instead of gold or silver. Good Intention and good Principles are indeed (as it were) the form and Soul of good Actions; but their being just and lawful are the body and matter of them; necessarily also concurring to their essence and integrity; they cannot subsist without it, but must pass (as it were) for ghosts and shadows. We are therefore concerned in all our doings to have an especial regard to Christ's Law as their rule; that will render them capable of Christ's Name, and denominate them Christian.

IV. Hereto we may add, that what we do in imitation of *Jesus*, and in conformity to his Practice (that living rule and copy proposed to us) we may



be said peculiarly to do in his Name. As a Picture useth to bear his Name, whom it was made to represent, and whom it resembles; so if we set *Christ's* Example before us, and endeavour to transcribe it; if our life in the principal lineaments of sanctity and goodness do resemble his holy life; they may well bear his Name. But if our practice be unlike and unsuitable to his, we cannot affix his Name thereto without great presumption and abuse; such as would be committed, if to a draught of foul hue, and ugly features, we should attribute the Name of some most handsome and goodly Person, of high worth and quality. To do thus in *Jesus* his Name (with such a regard to him) is a duty often prescribed unto us, not only as relating to some cases and actions, (as when his Charity, his Patience, his Humility, his Meekness are signally commended to our imitation) but generally, *He, that saith he abideth in him, ought as he walked, so himself also to walk*; that is, whoever professes himself a Christian ought to conform the whole tenour of his Conversation to that of *Jesus*; to endeavour in every imitable Perfection to resemble him. So that whenever we undertake any action, we should do well to look upon this Pattern, thus (as it were) examining and inquiring of our selves; What did my Master in this or the like case; do I do the same thing, do I act from the same Principles, do I proceed in the same manner as he did; am I herein his Disciple and Follower? if so, in his Name let me go on cheerfully; if not, let me forbear. Doing this will not be only according to our duty, but an especial help and furtherance of good practice.

Eph. 5. 1. 2.  
1 Cor. 10. 1.  
Joh. 15. 12,  
13. 14.  
Heb. 12. 2.  
Joh. 13. 15.  
Phil. 2. 5.  
1 Pet. 2. 21.  
1 Joh. 2. 6.

Ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι  
LXX.  
Psal. 44. 4.  
Sg. 24.  
Matt. 7. 22.  
Mar. 9. 38.  
Act. 3. 6. 4.  
10. 30.  
Joh. 17. 11.

2 Chro. 14. 11.

1 Sam. 17. 45.

Act. 3. 16.

Hab. 1. 16.

Mat. 28. 18.  
Joh. 3. 25.  
13. 3. 17. 2.  
Heb. 1. 2. 2. 8.  
Eph. 1. 22.  
1 Cor. 15. 27.  
Phil. 2. 9.  
Apoc. 5. 12.

V. To do in another's Name doth sometimes import doing by any power derived, or virtue imparted by another; for that a thing so done may be imputed, should be ascribed to that other. So, *Through thee* (saith the *Psalmist*) *will we push down our Enemies, in thy Name will we throw down those that hate us*, (through thee, and in thy Name signify the same thing). So did the *Apostles* cast out Devils, and perform their other Miracles in *Jesus* his Name (*ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι*, by his Name, 'tis sometime expressed) that is by a divine virtue imparted from him. To this I add another acceptance, scarce different (at least as to our purpose) from that, according to which doing in another's Name signifies doing it in trust, or confidence reposed upon another, with expectation of aid, or hope of good success from another. So, *we rest on thee*, (saith good King *Asa*) *and in thy name we go against this multitude*; in thy Name, that is, hoping for assistance and success from thee. And thus it is said, that *David went out against Goliath in the name of the Lord of hosts*; that is, confiding in God's help as his only weapon and defence: Thus also did the *H. Apostles* work their Miracles in *Jesus* his Name, *ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ*, by faith in his Name, (saith St. *Peter*) *his name hath made this Man strong*; that is, we did only trust in his divine Power, and it was that Power of his which restored that weak Person to his strength. And thus also it is our duty to do all things in our Saviour's Name; with faith and hope in him; wholly relying upon him for direction and assistance; expecting from him only a blessing and happy issue of our undertakings. What we do in confidence of our own wisdom or ability, or in affiance upon the help of any other Person or thing, we do in our own Name, or in the Name of that thing (or that Person) in whom we so confide; to our selves, or to such auxiliaries we shall be ready to attribute the success, and to render the glory of the Performance; *glorying in our own arm*, and *sacrificing to our Net*. But what we undertake only depending upon our Lord for ability, and success, may therefore bear his Name, because our faith derives the Power from him, which enables us happily to perform it; so that the performance may truly be attributed to him, and to him we shall be apt to ascribe it. And thus, I say, we are certainly obliged to do every thing in his Name; (in his Name alone;) retaining a constant sense both of our own infirmity, and of the impotency of all other created things; and consequently a total diffidence both in our selves, and in them; but reposing all our trust in the direction, and assistance of our All-wise, and All-mighty Lord; of *Jesus*, to whom all power in heaven and earth is given, (who indeed had it originally by Nature as God; but also farther hath acquired it by desert and purchase) into whose hands all things are given; and all things are put under his feet; who hath obtained this Power in design to use it for our good; and is thereby always



ways ready to help us in our need, if we have recourse unto him, and rely upon him; making him what St. Paul styles him; *Our hope*; our only hope; renouncing all other confidences not subordinate to him. To do so is a duty evidently grounded as well upon the reason of the thing, as upon the will and command of God; to do otherwise is no less a palpable folly, than a manifest injury to God. For, in truth, neither have we, or any other created thing any power, other than such as he is pleased freely to dispense; and which is not continually both for its being and its efficacy subject to him, so that he may at his pleasure subtract it, or obstruct its effect: *No King is saved by the multitude of an host; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength; a horse is a vain thing for safety*: Whence 'tis plain, that we cannot, upon any created power, ground a solid assurance of success in any undertaking; it will be *leaning upon a broken reed* which cannot support us, and will pierce our hands) both a vain and a mischievous confidence; that will abuse us, bringing both disappointment and guilt upon us; the guilt of wronging our Lord many ways; by arrogating to our selves, or assigning to others what he only doth truly deserve, and what peculiarly of right belongs to him; withdrawing the same from him; implying him unable or unwilling to assist us, and do us good; neglecting to use that strength which he so dearly purchased and so graciously tenders; so disappointing him, and defeating (as it were) his purposes of favour and mercy towards us. On the other side, trusting only upon our Saviour, we act wisely and justly, gratefully and officiously; for that in doing so, we build our hopes upon most sure grounds; upon a wisdom that cannot be deceived; upon a strength that cannot be withstood; upon a goodness that hath no limits; upon a fidelity that can never fail. For that we act with an humility, and sobriety of mind suitable to our condition, and to the reason of things; for that we thereby declare our good opinion of him as only able, and very willing to do us good; for that we render him his just honour and due; we comply with his earnest desires, we promote his gracious designs of mercy and kindness toward us. Hence it is that every where in H. Scripture God so highly commends, so greatly encourages this duty of trusting alone in him; that he so ill resents, and so strongly deters from the breach or omission thereof; *Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord: for he shall be like the heath in the desert; and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness; in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is; for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river; and shall not see when heat cometh; but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit*: thus in that place, thus in innumerable others we are threatened not only with disappointment, and bad success in our undertakings, but with severe punishment, if we betake our selves to other succours, and neglect or distrust, or (in so doing) desert God; but are encouraged, not only with assurance of prosperous success, but of additional rewards, if intirely in our proceedings we depend upon and adhere to God. Thus we should do in all (even our most common and ordinary) affairs, which no less than the rest are subject to his power, and governed by his care. For you know how St. James doth reprehend it as a piece of naughty boasting and arrogance, to say, *The morrow we will go to this City, and stay there a year, and trade and gain*; instead of saying, *if the Lord will, we will live, and do this or that*; that is, to resolve upon, undertake, or prosecute any affair without submission to God's will, and dependance on his Providence: But especially we ought, in matters and actions more spiritual, to practise this duty; for that to the performing of these, we have of our selves a peculiar impotence and unfitness; needing therefore a more special assistance from our Lord; that the success of them more particularly depends upon him; that the glory of them in an especial manner is appropriate, and (as it were) consecrate to him.

Eccl. 9. 11. *The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.*

*By strength shall no man prevail.*  
1 Sam. 2. 9.  
Psal. 33. 17. 146. 3. 44. 3.  
Isa. 36. 6.

Isa. 43. 11. — *Beside me there is no Saviour.*  
Hos. 13. 4. 10. Psal. 106. 21.  
Jer. 14. 8.

Psal. 146. 5. 40. 4. 44. 6. 33. 18.  
147. 11. 34. 22. 125. 1. 31. 19.  
61. 4. 91. 4. 118. 8. 78. 22. 66.  
2. 112. 7.

Isa. 51. 5. 57. 13. 50. 7. 26. 3.  
Jer. 14. 8.  
Jer. 17. 5. 6. &c.

Matt. 10. 29.

Jam. 4. 13.

If



οὐτε γὰρ  
ἀνθρώπων  
τι ἀνδρῶν  
ἐπὶ τὰ θεῶν  
συναρροῦν  
δὲ πρὸς  
Αὐτ. 3. 13.

Pfal. 44. 6.

Joh. 15. 5.

Act. 3. 12, 16.

Joh. 14. 12.

Phil. 4. 13.

2 Cor. 3. 5.

οὐδὲν ἀδύ-  
νατον ὑμῖν.  
Mat. 17. 20.  
21. 21.  
Luk. 17. 6.  
Mat. 14. 29.  
Luk. 10. 19.

2 Cor. 9. 21.

Joh. 14. 13.  
15. 16. 16.  
23. 24.

Eph. 5. 20. 3.  
21.

If it be a folly and a crime, to think we can do any thing without God, 'tis much more so to think we can do any thing good without him; 'tis an arrogance; 'tis an idolatry, 'tis a sacrifice much more vain and wicked to do so. To imagine that we can, by the force of our own reason and resolution, achieve any of those most high and hard enterprizes, to which by the rules of virtue and piety we are engaged; that we can, by our own conduct and prowess, encounter and withstand, defeat and vanquish those so crafty, so mighty enemies of our salvation (our own fleshly desires; the menaces and allurements of the World; the flights and powers of Darknes) is much a worse presumption, than in other affairs of greatest difficulty to expect success without the divine assistance and blessing; than in other most dangerous battels, to think we can, *by our own bow, and by our own spear save our selves*; that we can obtain victory otherwise, than from his hand and disposal, who is the Lord of Hosts. Reason tells us, and experience also shews, and our Saviour hath expressly said it, That (in these things) *without him* (without his especial influence and blessing) *we can do nothing*; he tells us, that we are but branches, inserted into him; so that, without continually drawing sap from him, we can have no life or vigour spiritual. The wisest and best of Men have, by their practice, taught us to acknowledge so much; to depend wholly upon him, to ascribe all to him in this kind. *Why* (say St. Peter and St. John) *do ye wonder at this; or why gaze ye upon us, as if by our own power or piety, we had made this man walk? — His name* (the name of Jesus) *through Faith in his name, hath made this man strong*: that acknowledgement indeed concerns a miraculous work; but spiritual works are in reality no less, they requiring as much or more of virtue supernatural, or the present interposition of God's hand to effect them; they make less shew without, but need as great efficacy within; so our Saviour, it seems, did imply, when he said, *He that believes in me, the works that I do he shall do, and greater works than these*. Every good and faithful Man doth not work Miracles, yet somewhat greater, it seems, by the grace of Christ, *he performs*: However, to these St. Paul referr'd, when he affirmed, *I can do all things in Christ that strengtheneth me*; nothing was so hard that he feared to attempt, that he despaired to master and go through with by the help of Christ; and, *Not* (saith he again) *that we are sufficient of our selves to think any thing of our selves; but our sufficiency is of God*: He was as sensible of his own inability, as he was confident in the gracious help of Christ. Thus should we do all things in the Name of Jesus; and 'tis not only a duty to do it, but it may be a great encouragement to us, that we are capable of doing it; a great comfort to consider, that in all honest undertakings, we have so ready, and so sure an aid to second and further us in them; confiding in which, nothing is so difficult, but we may easily accomplish (*a grain of faith will be able to remove mountains*;) nothing is so hazardous, but we may safely venture on (*walking on the Sea, treading upon serpents and scorpions; daring all the power of the enemy*.) In his Name we may, if our duty or good reason calls us forth (how small and weak soever, how destitute soever of defensive arms, or weapons offensive) naked and unarmed, with a sling and a stone, go out against the biggest, and best armed *Philistine*, nothing doubting of victory: Our weakness itself (if we be humbly conscious and sensible thereof) will be an advantage to us (as it was to St. Paul) to all effects and purposes, *the grace of our Lord will be sufficient for us*, if we apply it, and trust therein. But farther,

VI. To do in another's Name may denote, to do it with such regard to another, that we acknowledge (that, I say, we heartily and thankfully acknowledge) our hope of prospering in what we do; our expectation of acceptance, favour, or reward to be grounded on him; that they are procured by his merits and means, are bestowed only for his sake. Thus our Saviour bids us *offer our prayers in his name*; that is, representing unto God his meritorious performances in our behalf, as the ground of our access to God, of our hope to obtain from him what we request. So also we are enjoined to *give thanks in his name*; that is, with persuasion and acknowledgement, that only in respect to him we become capable to receive, or enjoy any good thing; that in effect, all the blessings by divine mercy vouchsafed us have been procured by him for us, are through him conveyed unto us. And thus also we should do all things in the name of Jesus, offering



offering all our Deeds to God, as sacrifices and services unworthy of acceptance, both in themselves, and as proceeding from us; but pleasing, and acceptable to God only for his sake. We should do well, upon all occasions, to remember our natural condition, and the general state of Mankind; such as it was before he did undertake, such as it would have continued still, had he not undertaken for it; That our race had forfeited, and was fallen from God's favour; having injured him beyond all power of making him any reparation or satisfaction; that thence it was secluded from all means and hopes apparent of happiness, was exposed and tended downright unto misery; that we consequently had no ground to hope, that God (from whom no less in mind and in deed, than by reason of our guilt and state of condemnation we were estranged) would, in kindness, bestow any good upon us, or from us accept favourably any thing we should do. But that, by our Saviour's performances, the case is altered; He, by his entire obedience, having so pleased God, by his patient submission to God's will, having so appeased his anger, and satisfied his justice, that God is not only reconciled, but hath an especial favour, bears an earnest good-will toward us. That now the good things we possess, we may truly esteem as blessings, and enjoy them with real comfort, as proceeding from mercy and kindness; now what we honestly endeavour, we may hope shall please God; now we have a free access to God, and may cheerfully present our sacrifices of duty and devotion, with a full persuasion that they shall be accepted. But all this happiness, all these favours and privileges, we must always remember to come from the continued procurement and mediation of the *Beloved*; so as ever to be ready to acknowledge it, and to return our thanks therefore. To this sense that our *Apostle* here had an especial regard, the words immediately following imply — *Doing all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, and the Father by him*; that is, in all things we do, taking occasion to render thanks to God, as for his sake being merciful and bountiful to us; bestowing upon us the good we enjoy, blessing our endeavours, accepting our performances. We must not conceit, that any regard, any mercy, any favour, any reward is due to us in equity, is in effect conferr'd upon us upon our personal score (for, how mean things are we in comparison of his greatness; how vile and filthy things must we appear to his most pure, and all-discerning eyes; how unworthy of his regard and of his affection must we needs take our selves to be, if we do but well consider, and are acquainted with our selves?) But that *in him* (*i. e.* for his sake, and by his means) *God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings*, in him *ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς*, Eph. 1. 3, 6. *God hath favoured*, and cast his Grace upon us; valuing us notwithstanding all our imperfections; loving us notwithstanding the spots with which we are defiled; notwithstanding all the offences we have committed; for the relation and alliance we have to *Jesus*. Nor must we look on our services (the best we are able to perform) as in themselves grateful or satisfactory: For all of them, if we mark them well, we shall find not only quite *unprofitable to God*, but very defective in many respects; for, Who can say, he performs any thing both in kind, in manner, in degree thoroughly right and good; with that ardency of love he owes to God, with that purity of intention, with that earnest vigour of spirit, with that undistractedness of mind, with which he should perform it? No; in all our flock we cannot pick out a sacrifice entire and unblemished; such as God requires, such as duty exacts of us. They need therefore (all our services need) to be commended and compleated by the beloved Son his perfectly well pleasing performances; they need to be cleansed and hallowed, by passing through the hands of our most Holy and undefiled High-priest: to become sweet and savoury (or to receive that *ἀσπλὺ δωδίκας*, which St. Paul speaks of) from being offered up *in his censer*. In fine, all our actions should, in our intention, be works of religion dedicated to God's service and honour; sacrifices, as it were, of gratitude and homage to God; so they ought all to be offered up in the Name of *Jesus*. I add farther,

VII. Lastly, that we do in the Name of *Jesus*, may well imply doing with invocation of him: thus we may understand that place of St. James, where the Elders are advised to *pray, and anoint the sick in the Lord's name*; for, to anoint them, imploring our Lord's blessing upon them, and upon those means used



In locum.  
 Ἄντων καλῶν βοηθῶν. ἐπὶ πάντων  
 πρῶτον αὐτῷ ἐυχόμεν. Ἄπ' αὐτῶν  
 πραγμάτων.

1 Tim. 4. 5.

Δεῖ πάσης τῆς πράξεως προηγεῖσθαι  
 τὴν προσευχὴν. M. Erem.

Μηδὲν μὴτε ποιεῖν μὴτε λέγειν  
 πρὶν ἢ τὸν Θεὸν καλεῖσθαι καὶ παρακα-  
 λῆσαι συνεσθῆναι τῶν ἐν χερσὶν ἡμῶν  
 ἀπάντων. Chryl.

Τὸ δὲ πρῶτον πάντες ὅσοι καὶ ἡ  
 χὺ σωφροσύνη μετέχουσιν ἐπὶ πάντι  
 ὁρμῇ καὶ σμικρῇ καὶ μεγάλῃ πρᾶγμα-  
 τῶν Θεὸν δεῖ πρὸ πάντων. Plato. Tim.

Vid. Epist. 8. Art. Epict. 11. 18.

1 Thel. 5. 17. Luk. 18. 1.

Rom. 12. 12. Colof. 4. 2.

Εὐτενᾶς.

continue with Patience, and earnestness in Prayer; but that we should annex it to, or interpose it among all our actions, undertaking nothing (at least of consideration or moment) without it. We should do it (our Saviour commands)

Luk. 11. 36.

Eph 6. 18.

\* Eph 5. 19.

\* Eph 5. 19.

Phil. 4. 6. 7.

ἐν παντὶ καὶ ὅπου, that is, *on every occasion*; and Saint Paul gives the same direction, *Praying*, says he, ἐν παντὶ καὶ ὅπου, *on all opportunities, with all prayer and supplication in spirit*; (in spirit, that is, I take it, \* *in our hearts* at least, and with secret elevations of our mind, if not with our mouth and voice.) And

\* ἐν παντί.

Bene ac sapienter majores instituerunt,  
 ut rerum agendarum, ita dicendi initium  
 a precationibus caperetur; quod nihil rite,  
 nihilque providenter homines sine Deorum  
 immortalium ope, consilio, honore auspica-  
 rentur. Plin. in Paneg.

Job 18. 7. Isa. 30. 1. Hof. 10. 6.

Prov. 1. 25, 30. Psa. 106. 13. 16. 7.

73. 24. 107. 11.

Jer. 10. 23.

Prov. 20. 24. 16. 9.

(more explicitly elsewhere saith he) *Be careful for nothing, but in every thing* (in all your affairs) *by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God*. And thus to do (to accompany all our undertakings with Prayer) we are indeed concern'd upon many accounts. We need God's direction (being our selves very blind and ignorant) in the choice of what we attempt; that our ends and designs may be good; conducive to God's honour and our own true advantage. For, as the Prophet tells us, *The way of man is not in himself, neither is it in man that walketh to direct his steps*; And, as the Wise-man adds, *Man's goings are of the Lord, how then can a man understand his own way?*

(implying, since God only knows what is best for us, that we of our selves without his direction, know not what to do, whether to go:) The H. Psalmist signifies the same in those words (very encouraging to the practice of this duty)

Psal. 25. 12. 9.

*What man is he that feareth the Lord?* (that feareth him, that is, who worshipeth him, and seeketh his guidance) *him shall he teach in the way that he shall chuse*. We need also (being our selves not only weak and infirm, but inconstant and unstable) God's assistance, and upholding hand in the pursuance of our well-chosen designs (that we may use the best means, and proceed in a straight course; that we may persist upright and steady in our Proceedings) that which the *Wise man* seems to call, the establishing of our thoughts, and promises, as a consequence, upon our seeking God's assistance in our actions, and relying thereon; *Commit*, saith he, *thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established*; (thou shalt drive on thy good purposes steadily, without stumbling or falling; at least irrecoverably.) So the *Psalmist* assures us concern-

Prov. 16. 9.

Psal. 37. 23.

24. 17. 31.

ing a good man: *The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; none of his steps shall slide; though he fall he shall not utterly be cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand*. We also farther, as to the final success of our affairs, stand in need of God's blessing; that he, upon whose will altogether depends the disposal of all events, should bestow a good issue unto our endeavours, that they prove not matter of discouragement, or discomfort to us; that which also the *Psalmist* assures us of obtaining, upon condition of our imploring and depending upon God for it; *Commit thy way* (saith he) *unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass*. We do thus need in all

Psal. 37. 5.

119. 5. 133.

Luke 11. 9. 10. John 14. 13. Psal.

9. 10.

our affairs the direction, assistance and blessing of our Lord; but shall not have them without Prayer; for, the rule is, *Ask and have, seek and find*; without asking we are not like-

ly



ly to obtain those gifts; without seeking we must not hope to find those benefits from God. If we are so proud, as to think we do not need them; or so negligent, as not to mind them; or so distrustful of the divine power or goodness, that we imagine he cannot or will not afford them to us; we are like to be so unhappy as to want them. God expects from us, that we should, in whatever we do, acknowledge him; ('tis the *Wise-man's* expression, *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths*;) acknowledge him as the only faithful guide and counsellour; as the only sufficient helper and protector; as the only free arbitrator and donor of good success. Nothing therefore is well done, which is not thus done; we cannot be satisfied in what we do; we cannot hope for a comfortable end thereof; we cannot expect a blessing from God, if we have refused, or if we have neglected the recommending our proceedings to his care. We can, I say, do nothing; not eat, not sleep, not trade, not travel, not study with any true content, any reasonable security, and satisfactory hope, if we have not first humbly implored God's favour; committing our selves, and our business into his hand, that hand which dispenseth all good, which alone can keep off all danger and mischief from us. *God shall send his Angel before thee*: so did our Father *Abraham* Gen. 23. 7. send his servant about his business; having questionless before commended it to God by Prayer. *God Almighty give you mercy before the man*: so did *Jacob* Gen. 43. 14. give his sons their dispatches toward *Egypt*: In such a manner did we enter upon all our Affairs, we could not but be full of hope, and void of care concerning them; for that commonly we are so full of anxiety about the event of what we undertake, whence doth it arise, but from a neglect of this duty? for, having committed our business into so sure a hand, how could we farther be solicitous about it? Had we, according to St. *Peter's* advice, *Cast our care upon the Lord*; 1 Pet. 5. 7. or, *cast our burden upon him* (as the *Psalmist* exhorts us) had we duly sought and invoked him, who *never faileth them that seek him, who is nigh to all them that call upon him*; we should not have such a load of troublesome care resting upon us; our hearts would be light, and free as to all these things; we should be secure, that nothing very bad, or disastrous, could befall us; we should experience it true, what the Prophet affirms in that Prayer or *Psalms* to God; *Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: Be careful for nothing*, Saint *Paul* bids us, *but in every thing let your requests be made known to God*; if we perform the latter part, the former will naturally be consequent thereon. Thus, in the last place, should we do all things in the name of *Jesus* (upon all occasions praying to him, or which is all one, to God in his name) which that we may do, (that we are allowed and encouraged to do it) is also a privilege, and an advantage unvaluable.

In so many ways and particular respects may we, and ought we to perform all we do in the name of *Jesus*: We should do every thing out of grateful affection and respect to him, as our chief Principle; every thing as his servants, aiming especially at the pleasing of him and promoting his honour, as our principal end; every thing according to his will and commandment, as our constant rule; every thing after his example, as our best pattern; every thing, in confidence of his gracious assistance and blessing, as our only strength and support; every thing with hope of acceptance purely upon his account; every thing with thankful sense and acknowledgement to God for the mercies and favours conveyed unto us by his means, conferred upon us for his sake; every thing with humble invocation of him, or with prayer to God in his name: In sum, every thing with a due and proper regard had to him; so that he be not passed over or left out in any thing we undertake; but come always into consideration, according as our relations to him, and our obligations to him do require. In the performances of which duties the life indeed of our religion (of all our good practice, of all our devotion) doth consist.

To all this I shall only subjoin the mention of one general duty, implied in all and each of those we have propounded, which is this:

VIII. That our Lord *Jesus* should be frequently (and in a manner continually; always, as to the habitual disposition of our souls, actually upon all fit occasions) present to our minds and thoughts. This, I say, is plainly implied in the former duties. For, how is it possible we should perform all our actions (yea, utter all our words) with any sort of regard to him, if we seldom think



think of him? Such is the nimbleness and activity of our minds, that it is feasible enough to do thus; and, in respect to other objects, we commonly experience it done; for *animus est ubi amat*; whatever we affect, our mind, however otherwise employed, will be thinking on it; 'tis hard to restrain our thoughts from it; (the covetous man's heart will be among his bags; the voluptuous man's mind will be in his dishes; the studious Person will be musing on his notions, do he what he can) Why then may we not as well, as often direct our minds toward our Lord, and mix the remembrance of him with all other employments or entertainments of our thoughts? to do so is surely very requisite, and very expedient toward our good practice. Things far distant, or long absent, can have small efficacy, or influence; 'tis so we see in natural, and 'tis no less so in moral causalities; wherein representation to the fancy and memory have a force answerable to that, which real conjunction and approximation have in nature. As the heat and light of the Sun, the farther he goes, and the longer he stays from us, do the more (proportionably) decrease; so according to our less frequently, and less seriously thinking upon any object, our affection and our respect thereto decay. If therefore we desire, according to our duty, to maintain in our hearts such dispositions (due affection and due reverence) toward *Jesus*; if we intend to suit our actions accordingly with due regard to him; we should, in order to those purposes, apply this so necessary and useful mean, of frequently bending our minds toward him; the doing of which in likelihood, will conduce much to the sanctifying our affections, and to the governing our actions in a constant performance of our duty. For we can hardly sure (admitting we do seriously believe him) to be such as we profess to believe him) with any competent attention think of him, but that thought will be apt to restrain us from doing ill, to incite us to do well; since together with that thought, some of his excellent Perfections, some of our principal relations, and some of our great obligations to him (each of which hath much virtue and force to those purposes) will interpose and represent themselves. Frequently thinking of him, we shall sometimes apprehend him with incessant toil, labouring in the service of God, and in promoting the welfare of men; sometime we shall imagine him undergoing all kind of contumelies and bitter pains; suffering by the cruel hands and tongues of spiteful men; we shall (as it were) behold him bleeding under the scourge, and hanging upon the cross for our sakes. Sometimes he will appear to our minds crowned with Majesty, reigning in Sovereign Power and Glory, having all things in subjection under his feet; sometimes also he will be represented as our Judge, before whose tribunal we must all shortly stand, and be obliged to render an account of all our doings; which thoughts passing through our minds, will be apt to make some impression upon our hearts, to have some influence upon our actions. For, can that most amiable and most venerable *Idea* of a Person so entirely pure and holy, so meek and humble, so full of benignity and charity to all men (particularly towards our selves) be otherwise than apt to forge some especial love and reverence toward him; than incline us strongly to do well, yea than teach us what and how we should do so, in conformity to such a Pattern set before us? it occurring to our thoughts, that he is our Lord and Master (who made us and maintains us, who purchased us to himself, and redeemed us from miserable slavery by his own heart-blood) how can it fail to raise in us some awe, some sense of duty toward him? Will not the apprehension of what he did and what he suffered for us powerfully mind us, that according to all justice and equity, in all ingenuity and gratitude we are bound to do only that which will please him? If we think of *Jesus*, when we are setting upon any action, shall we not thereupon be apt thus to interrogate our selves? Shall I do otherwise than he did, or would have done, so rendring my self unlike, or contrary to him? Shall I be so unfaithful to my glorious Master, as to disserve him, or to neglect his service? Shall I be so unworthy toward my gracious Redeemer, my best Friend, my most bountiful Benefactor, as to disoblige him, to wrong him, to dishonour him, to grieve him by thus doing? Shall I be so vain and rash as to cross him who is my King, able to controll and subdue me; as to offend him who is my Judge, resolved to condemn and punish me? Shall I willfully forfeit that friendship and favour of his,

upon



upon which all my happiness doth depend? Shall I procure his displeasure and enmity, from which my utter ruin must inevitably follow? Such considerations have a natural connexion with our frequent thinking upon, and the Presence (as it were) of our Blessed Saviour to our minds, which therefore may be commended to us as an excellent instrument of bettering our hearts and our lives.

To conclude; Let us all always remember, and consider, that we are Christians related unto *Christ Jesus*, and called by his name, and as so, in his name, let us do all things.

*Lord of all power and might; who art the Author and giver of all good things; graft in our hearts the love of thy name; increase in us true religion; nourish us with all goodness; and of thy great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

## S E R M O N II.

### Of being Imitatours of Christ.

1 COR. iv. 16.

*I beseech you be followers of me: or, I exhort you be imitators of me.*

Παρακαλῶ  
ὑμᾶς μιμη-  
ταί μου γίνε-  
σθαι.

**S**aint Paul by an impartial reflection upon his heart and life being well assured, that he by the divine Spirit was enlightened with a certain knowledge of all necessary truth, and endued with plentiful measures of divine grace; being conscious of a sincere zeal in himself to honour God and benefit men; being satisfied, that with integrity he did suit his conversation to the dictates of a good conscience, to the sure rule of God's Law, and to the perfect example of his Lord; that his intentions were pure and right; his actions warrantable, and the tenour of his life conspicuously blameless, doth, upon all occasions (not out of any self-conceitedness, arrogance, or ostentation, from which he, by frequent acknowledgement of his own defects and his miscarriages, and by ascribing all the good he had, or did, to the grace and mercy of God, doth sufficiently clear himself; but from an earnest desire to glorify God, and edifie his disciples) describe, and set forth his own Practice, proposing it as a Rule, pressing it upon them as an argument, an encouragement, an obligation to the performance of several duties. So by it he directeth and urgeth the *Ephesians* to a charitable compliance, or complaisance; a sweet and inoffensive demeanour toward other: *Give no offence* (saith he) *neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God; even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved; be ye followers of me:* so he guides and provokes the *Philippians* to endeavours of proficiency in grace, and the study of Christian Perfection: *Nevertheless* (saith he to them) *whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing: brethren, be followers together with me, and mark such as walk so, as ye have us for an example.* By the like instance and argument, he moveth the *Thessalonians* to a sober and orderly conversation, to industry in their calling, to self-denial, and a generous disregard of private interest: *For your selves* (saith he) *know how ye ought to follow us; for we behaved not our selves disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for nought, but wrought with labours and travail day and night,*

1 Cor. 4. 32,  
&c. 10. 1.

Phil. 3. 16, 17.

2 Thess. 3. 7.



night, that we might not be chargeable to any of you; not because we have not power, but to make our selves an example to you to follow us: The same Persons he commendeth, as having by this means been induced to a patient constancy in faith and good works: *Ye know (saith he) what manner of men we were among you for your sake, and ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction:* The practice of all virtue and goodness, he also thus recommendeth under this rule and obligation: *Those things, which ye have learned and received, and heard, and seen in me, do, and the God of Peace shall be with you.* Thus in our Text, (referring it to the context) he urgeth the Christians, his disciples at *Corinth* to fidelity and diligence in the charges and affairs committed to them, to humility, patience and charity; wherein he declareth himself to have set before them an evident and exact Pattern. Which Practice of Saint *Paul* doth chiefly teach us two things; That we be careful to give; and that we be ready to follow good example: the latter of which duties more directly and immediately agreeth to the intent of this place, and it therefore I shall only now insist upon: the subject and scope of my discourse shall be to shew, that it is our duty and concernment to regard the Practices of good men, and to follow their example. To which purpose we may observe,

I. That it is the manner of the *Apostles*, upon all occasions, to inculcate this duty: we heard St. *Paul*: hear St. *James*: *Take (saith he) my brethren, the Prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord for an example of suffering affliction: Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy; and the Apostle to the Hebrews: We desire (saith he) that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end; that ye be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises: and again; Wherefore seeing we are also compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight; and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.* And St. *Peter*: *Ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands; even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord.* And wherever the eminent deeds of holy men are mentioned, it is done with an intimation at least, or tacite supposition, that we are obliged to follow their example.

II. We may consider that to this end (that we might have worthy Patterns to imitate) the goodness of God hath raised up in all ages such excellent Persons, furnishing them with rare endowments, and with continual influences of his grace assisting them, to this purpose, that they might not only instruct us with wholesom doctrine, but lead us also by good example in the Paths of righteousness. For certainly what St. *Paul* saith concerning the sins and punishments of bad men, is no less applicable to the virtuous deeds and happy examples of good men: *All these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*

Μεγίστη δὲ ὁδὸς πρὸς τὴν κατὰ θεὸν εὐερίαν καὶ ἡ μελέτη τῶν διανοητικῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν ταύταις, ὅτι καὶ τῶν περὶ τὴν ἱστορίαν εὐρίσκειν, καὶ οἱ βίοι τῶν μακαρίων ἀνδρῶν ἀνάγερται παρὰ τοὺς ἀγίους οἷον εἰκόνας τινὲς ἐμυλῶσι καὶ οὕτως δίδωσι πολιτείαν, τῇ μιμήματι τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἔργων πενήνται.

Bal. ad Greg. Ep. 2.

III. They are written for our admonition; It was a special design of God's Providence in recording and recommending to our regard the divine histories: They were not framed as monuments of a fruitless memory and fame to them; they were not proposed to us as entertainments of our curiosity, as objects of wonder, as matters of idle discourse; that unconcernedly we should gaze upon them, or talk about them; as Children look on fine Gays; but they are set before us, as copies to transcribe, as lights to

guide us in our way to happiness: So that if we will not ingratfully frustrate the intentions of Divine Providence for our good, we must dispose our selves to imitate those illustrious Paterns of Virtue and Piety.

IV. We may farther consider that in the nature of the thing it self good example is of singular advantage to us, as being apt to have a mighty virtue, efficacy and influence upon our practice: which consideration should much ingage us to regard it, applying it as an instrument of making our selves good, and consequently of becoming happy. Good example is, as I say, of exceeding advantage to practice upon many accounts.

r. Ex-



1. Examples do more compendiously, easily and pleasantly inform our minds, and direct our practice, than precepts or any other way or instrument of discipline. Precepts are delivered in an universal and abstracted manner, naked, and void of all circumstantial attire, without any intervention, assistance, or suffrage of sense; and consequently can have no vehement operation upon the fancy, and soon do fly the memory; like flashes of lightening, too subtile to make any great impression, or to leave any remarkable footsteps, upon what they encounter; they must be expressed in nice terms, and digested in exact method; they are various; and in many disjointed pieces conspire to make up an entire body of direction; they do also admit of divers cases, and require many exceptions, or restrictions which to apprehend distinctly, and retain long in memory, needs a tedious labour, and continual attention of mind, together with a piercing and steady judgment: But good example with less trouble, more speed, and greater efficacy causes us to comprehend the business, representing it like a Picture exposed to sense, having the Parts orderly disposed, and completely united, suitably clothed and dressed up in its circumstances; contained in a narrow compass, and perceptible by one glance, so easily insinuating it self into the fancy, and durably resting therein: In it you see at once described the thing done, the quality of the actor, the manner of doing, the minute seasons, measures and adjuncts of the action; with all which you might not perhaps by numerous rules be acquainted; and this is the most facile, familiar and delightful way of instruction, which is by experience, history and observation of sensible events. A systeme of Precepts, though exquisitely compacted, is in comparison but a *Skeleton*, a dry, meagre, lifeless bulk, exhibiting nothing of person, place, time, manner, degree, wherein chiefly the flesh and blood, the colours and graces, the life and soul of things do consist; whereby they please, affect, and move us: But example imparts thereto a goodly corpulency, a life, a motion, renders it conspicuous, specious and active, transforming its notional universality into the reality of singular subsistence. This discourse is verified by various experience; for we find all Masters of Art and Science explicating, illustrating and confirming their general Rules and Precepts by particular examples: *Mathematicians* demonstrate their *Theorems* by *Schemes* and *Diagrams*, which in effect are but sensible instances; *Orators* back their *Enthymemes* (or rational Argumentations) with *Inductions* (or singular Examples;) *Philosophers* alledge the Practice of *Socrates*, *Zeno*, and the like Persons of famous Wisdom and Virtue to authorize their doctrine: *Politicks* and civil Prudence is more easily and sweetly drawn out of good history, than out of Books de *Republica*. *Artificers* describe *Models*, and set *Patterns* before their Disciples, with greater success, than if they should deliver accurate Rules and Precepts to them: For who would not more readily learn to build by viewing carefully the Parts and Frame of a well contrived structure, than by a studious enquiry into the rules of *Architecture*; or to draw by setting a good Picture before him, than by meerly speculating upon the laws of *Perspective*; or to write fairly and expeditely by imitating one good copy, than by hearkening to a thousand oral Prescriptions; the understanding of which, and faculty of applying them to practice, may prove more difficult, and tedious, than the whole practice it self as directed by a copy? Neither is the case much different in Moral concernments; one good example may represent more fully, and clearly to us the nature of a virtue, than any verbose description thereof can do: in sooner time, and with greater ease we may learn our duty by regarding the deportment of some excellent Person, than by attending to many Philosophical discourses concerning it: for instance, if we desire to know what Faith is, and how we should rely upon the Divine Providence, let us propose to our consideration the practice of *Abraham*; wherein we may see the Father of the Faithful leaving a most pleasant country, the place of his nativity, and questionless most dear unto him under that notion; deserting his home and fixed habitation, his estate and patrimony; his kindred

Xen. Apomn. 4.

It was Xenoph. observation, grounded upon his own Experience that the memory of Socrates's Conversation did greatly profit his Acquaintance (τὸ μνημονεῖν μὴ παρὰ τὸ ἐπεμελεῖσθαι τὰς εἰωθότας αὐτῷ συνήτας) and Seneca saith, that the Crowd of Philosophers, which followed the same Wise-man derived more of their Ethics from his manners than his words (plus ex moribus, quam ex verbis Socratis traxit) Sen. Eph. 11. And he that shall reflect upon the Story concerning his behaviour, when he was by malicious envy persecuted to death, may perhaps be more edified thereby, than by all his subtile discourses about death, and the Souls state after it.

and



and acquaintance, to wander he knew not where in unknown Lands, with all his Family, leading an uncertain and ambulatory life in Tents, sojourning and shifting among strange People, devoid of Piety and Civility (among *Canaanites* and *Egyptians*) upon a bare confidence in the Divine Protection and Guidance: we may see him Aged 99 years, sensible of his own natural impotence, and an equal incapacity in his Consort as to such purposes, yet with a steady belief assuring himself, that from those dead stocks a numerous Progeny should spring, and that he who by all Power of Nature was unable to beget one Child, should by virtue of God's Omnipotent Word become the Father of a mighty Nation: We may see him upon the first summons of the Divine Command without scruple or hesitancy, readily and chearfully yielding up his only Son (the sole ground of his hope and prop of his Family, to whose very Person the promise of multiplication was affixed) to be sacrificed and slain; not objecting to his own reason the palpable inconsistency of counsels so repugnant; nor anxiously labouring to reconcile the seeming contrariety between the Divine Promises and Commands; but resolved as it were (with an implicit Faith in God) to believe things incredible, and to rely upon events impossible; contemplating these things let us say what Discourse could so lively describe the nature of true Faith, as this illustrious Precedent doth.

Again, he that would learn how to demean himself in resisting the assaults of temptation, let him consider that one carriage of *Joseph*; of him, together withstanding the courtships of an attractive beauty, and rejecting the solicitations of an imperious Mistress, advantaged by opportunities of privacy and solitude; when the refusal was attended with extream danger, and all the mischiefs which the disdain of a furious lust disappointed, of an outrageous jealousy provoked, of a loving Master's confidence abused, could produce; and all this by one of meanest condition in a strange Place, where no intercession, favour, or patronage of friends could be had, no equal examination of his cause might be expected; of him doing this, merely upon Principles of Conscience, and out of fear of God; (saying, *How can I do this great evil and sin against God?*) and he that considers this example, how can he be ignorant of his duty in the like case?

Again, would we learn wisdom, constancy and resolution in the conduct of honest, and worthy designs, let us set before our eyes the Pattern of *Moses*? and therein take notice, how he obeying divine instinct and direction, having embraced that noble Purpose of rescuing his Countrymen from the *Egyptian* Bondage, of settling them in a method of happy Policy, and in bringing them into the promised Land of their enjoyment, did behave himself in the execution thereof; with how indefatigable industry he solicited their cause with a fickle, and deceitful, stupid, and hard-hearted King; enduring frequent disappointments and repulses, together with furious storms of anger, and most terrible menaces from him: how having there surmounted all obstacles, and effectually enlarged the People from their restraint in *Egypt*, he led them on foot through a valley, encompassed with mountains of Sea; and after that, undertook a tedious march (a march of 40 Years) through a wild, barren, and dry solitude, (where no water was, but such as issued from the stony bowels of a rock; no food or means of subsistence, but such as was supplied by the miraculous purveyance of Heaven) in the mean while resisting the continual invasions of open enemies, in great numbers with armed violence striving to obstruct his passage, and defeat his purpose; having also (which was more) his Patience constantly exercised in supporting the froward perverseness of a most incredulous, and intractable People, which took all occasions of complaint and mutiny against him; in contesting with the factious rivalry of envious Nobles, who repined at his successes, and maligned his authority among them; in bearing the indiscreet and untoward prevarications of his own most intimate friends and nearest relations, complying with the wicked humours and desires of the People; in sustaining many other Perplexities and Crosses; all which notwithstanding he with insuperable resolution happily atchieved his glorious undertaking; and will not this example, attentively regarded, beyond the power of any other means or method, explain to us the way of industry, courage and perseverance in good and worthy, though high and difficult enterprises?

One



One instance more, and that of all most pertinent to our occasion; Would you be instructed, how faithfully to discharge the ministerial, or any other office? With a steadfast attention then behold the excellent Pattern of *St. Paul*; consider how in all his designs he zealously and singly aimed at the honour and service of God, neglecting his own safety, quiet, credit, and all worldly accommodations for the advancement of them. How affectionately he tendered the good and welfare of those, the care of whose spiritual condition was commended to him, using all his skill, care and strength in promoting their edification; declaring himself for their good to be content, not only for a time to be absent from the Lord, being deprived of that happiness which he otherwise impatiently groaned for, and was fully assured of; but desirous, as it seems, to be secluded for ever from his blissful presence by a dreadful *Anathema*, for their sake. How prudently, meekly and humbly he demeaned himself toward them; becoming all things to all men, forming himself into all allowable shapes and colours; undergoing all sorts of censure and imputations (of a despicable, an ignorant, a foolish Person) tempering his speech and deportment to their capacities and needs, bearing their miscarriages, and complying with their weaknesses; parting freely with his own just liberty, pleasure and satisfaction, for their spiritual advantage. How generously he despised his own profit and ease, refusing that supply he might with all reason and equity have required from them; chusing to maintain himself with the labour of his own hands, and the sweat of his brows, that he might render the Gospel no-wise burdensome, or offensive to them. How vigilantly and courageously he withstood the mischievous endeavours of false Brethren, and treacherous Seducers; earnestly contending for the Churches peace and quiet against factious spirits, and for the substantial truths of the Gospel against the pernicious devices of Hereticks and false Teachers. How patiently he sustained all manner of Pains, Griefs, Travels, Wants, Losses, Hazards, Distresses, Disappointments, Affronts and Reproaches for the Honour of God, the benefit of his spiritual Children, the discharge of his Duty, and satisfaction of his Conscience: These things, I say, regard, and then tell me, if he might not reasonably inculcate this admonition, *Imitate me*; and if his example be not of rare use to instruct us, how faithfully we should in our respective charges and employments demean our selves. I might in like manner instance how excellent a rule of Devotion the practice of the Royal Prophet may be unto us; how *Elias* his practice might teach us to be zealous Champions for truth and righteousness; how they who would be good Judges, or honest Patriots may receive direction from the carriage of *Samuel*, *Daniel* and *Nehemiah*. But I proceed to say that farther,

ἡ προμνηστὴς ἐν  
διδασκαλίᾳ  
δείκνυσι ὅτι  
μακάριον ἴδιον  
ἐστὶν ἀρετὴν  
κίαν ὅτι  
Μωσῆς, ὡς  
ὁ γὰρ ὁ  
Δαβὶδ, &c.  
Chrys. T. V.  
p. 656.

II. Good Examples do not only inform; but they perswade and incline our reason to good practice, commending it to us by plausible authority: a way of reasoning the most plain, easie and suitable to all mens capacities; less subject to error and doubt, than any other in particular cases; whereby as it is always more easie to know what is good and fit, so commonly it is most safe: there being few who can so well discern what is good, as they may rest in the judgments of others. For that wise and virtuous Persons do any thing, is a very probable argument, that we are obliged, and concerned to do the like; seeing such Persons may in all their actions be supposed to have an unbiassed regard to the rules of truth and justice. He therefore who can say, that *Abraham*, or *David*, or *St. Paul*, did so in such a case, supposeth that he hath no small reason to do the like; it is accounted pardonable, yea almost commendable, to err with such Persons; because it is done with good appearance of reason, seeing such Persons were themselves unlikely to err: Will you (saith *Cicero*) commemorate to me *Scipio's*, and *Cato's*, and *Laelius's*, and say they did the same thing; though the thing displeases me, yet I cannot withstand the authority of such men: Their authority is so great, that it can cover even the suspicion of a fault. 'Tis obvious in temporal concerns, how great a stroke this way of discourse hath; how boldly men adventure their dearest interests in following such, whom they probably deem honest, and able to guide them: For Instance, in travelling, if one being ignorant

Africanus mihi, & Catones, & Laelios  
commemorabis & eos fecisse idem dicas,  
quamvis res mihi non placeant, tamen con-  
tra hominum auctoritatem probare non  
potero. Magna est hominum auctoritas,  
& etiam tanta, ut delicti suspitionem te-  
gere possit. Cic. in Verr. 3.



rant or doubtful of his way happen to meet a Person, whom he conceives able, and no-wise concerned, or disposed to mis-lead him, he without scruple follows him, and confidently relies on his direction: In like manner, all good men in the way of virtuous practice tending directly toward happiness (our common journey's end;) it being their design, their interest, and their endeavour not to mistake the way, not to defect from the right and nearest course thereto, men are apt to think it reasonable, and safe to accompany, in their Progress, or to Press after them in their steps: and surely, next to a clear, and certain rule, there is not any more rational warrant for Practice, and consequently no better inducement thereto, than such good Precedents. Farther,

III. Examples do incite our Passions, and impel them to the performance of duty. They raise hope, they enflame courage, they provoke emulation; they urge upon modesty, they awaken curiosity, they affect fancy; they set in motion all the springs of Activity. It may not be amiss to shew how, particularly,

Chryl. Tom.  
1. p. 69.

1. They raise hope, by discovering to us and assuredly proving the feasibility of matters propounded, or the possibility of success in undertaking good designs, and that by the best and most convincing of arguments, experience. Nothing so depresseth hope, and advanceth despondency as an apprehension of impossibility, or which is equivalent thereto, an extream difficulty (appearing to surmount our present forces) in the reasonable consequence. For raising the great infirmity of humane nature, its strong propensities to evil, and averting themselves in the way of good practice, all duties as barely represented in Precepts, and pressed by rational inducements might seem to be, if good example did not clearly demonstrate them to be possible, yea sometimes facile; even those, which upon a superficial view do seem most difficult, and insuperable by our weak endeavour. The Stoical Doctrine, which described a fine and stately Portraiture of virtue; and inculcated very strict rules (a close following of God and nature, a perfect victory over self, the subduing all Passions and over-ruling all corporeal Appetites; an entire freedom, composure and tranquillity of Mind; a total indifferency in respect of Fortune, and all external events, with the like duties, rarely practised, although upon all accounts acknowledged conformable to reason) was therefore by most rejected as useless, or exploded as ridiculous, as being presumed to propound matters purely Imaginary and unpracticable: yet he that hath seen this doctrine in great measure exemplified by Zeno, the first Master of it, would have had no such reason to condemn it, nor to despair of practising according to it, if he would seriously endeavour it: exemplified, I say, by Zeno, whereof we have an illustrious testimony from a solemn decree of the Athenians: *ἡ δὲ δὴ Ζῆνων Μνασίου, &c.* Laert. in Zen. Whereas Zeno the Son of Mnaseas the Cittican, having many years professed Philosophy in this City, and as well in all other things hath demeaned himself like a good man, as particularly exhorting the young men, who went to be instructed by him, hath provoked them to virtue, and sobriety; without exhibiting his own life a pattern of the best things answerable to the discourses he used to make; it is therefore auspiciously decreed by the people, that Zeno the Son of Mnaseas be solemnly praised and crowned (according to the usage) with a golden crown; and that a monument be erected for him at the publick charge in the Ceramicum (the Place where those were interr'd, who had bravely exposed their lives for publick defence.) This was indeed a noble attestation, and a comely respect exhibited to a virtuous Conversation: making in some measure a satisfaction for the heinous affront done thereto, when instead of honouring it with a Crown, they rewarded it with a cup of Poison, given to the excellent Socrates. Suitably to which testimony Seneca saith of Cleanthes, that his virtuous Practice depended more upon the observation of Zeno's life, than the information of his doctrine. *Zenonem Cleanthes non expressisset si rum tantummodo audisset; vita ejus interfuit, secreta perspexit, observavit illam an ex formula sua viveret.* Cleanthes (saith he) had not so nearly resembled Zeno, if he had only attended to his discourses: he was present to his life, he took notice of



of his private carriage, he observed whether his practice did suit to his Doctrine. So that Stoicism it self which speaketh such Prodigies, was it seems founded not only upon big words, the issues of a speculative fancy, but more upon the good Practice of its first Master and Institutor. And indeed he that would effectually perswade the undertaking of any enterprise, must either suppose it, or prove it effectible; and the most easie, the most evident way of proving it is by Example. Men (saith Pliny Junior well) are better instructed by examples, which have in them chiefly this advantage, that they do prove the things may be done which they enjoy. And, Humane infirmity (saith Salvian to the same purpose) requires the assistance of example, that it may more easily now perform that, which it knows others to have before done; all posterity being admonished by hearing that what hath once been done, may be done again; And, The Example (saith St. Bernard) of a work done is a lively and efficacious Oration, easily perswading what we intend, by proving that feasible, which we strive to perswade unto. Upon which score we therefore are exceedingly obliged to those holy men who by their Practice have assured us, that the highest duties exacted of us by our religion (the mortification of unreasonable desires, the suppression of irregular passions; the loving and blessing our Enemies; the renouncing worldly vanities and pleasures, the rejoicing in afflictions, the voluntary abdication of our estates in some cases, yea, exposing life it self to inevitable hazard and loss) are not chimerical Propositions of impossible Performances; but duties (if we shall seriously and vigorously apply our endeavours to them, and suffer our hopes to be elevated by their example) really practicable: Piety abstractedly view'd in Precept may seem an airy Project, a Name, a Notion; but it being seen in Example will prove a matter substantial, true and feasible. A direct and pure speculation thereof may daze our sight, and dash our hopes; but as being reflected from Persons practising it we may bear its lustre, and hope to attain it.

2. Examples do enflame courage. So the Apostle to the Hebrews signifieth, when to this purpose he intimateth that he mentioned and setteth before them the examples of the Patriarchs; that he thereby might excite their courage, and cause them resolutely to undertake that obedience, and patiently to undergo those afflictions, which they performed and sustained; that (saith he) *ye be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.* For that heat, and active Spirit, which in some degree resideth in all mens breasts, is by example kindled, as one flame is kindled by the contact, or approach of another. How many Persons timorous, and averse from dangerous undertakings, have notwithstanding become very bold and adventurous in war by the discipline and influence of an exemplary valour? 'Tis Plutarch's observation concerning Caesar's Souldiers, that they who in service under other Commanders did not exceed the ordinary rate of courage, nor excel their fellows, did yet when he lead them become irresistibly valiant, being animated and inspired by his unparalleled Gallantry; and who is there indeed so incurably heartless, so desperately sluggish or stupid, whom the sight of a valiant Leader, marching before into the mouth of danger, will not infuse fire and vigour into, and instigate forward into a participation of brave adventure? So example doth by a kind of contagion insinuate courage, or inveagle men thereinto; beside that it is a kind of daring, and proclaimeth him a Dastard that will not imitate it; which imputation the lowest courage of Man can hardly digest; and will therefore by doing somewhat answerable strive to decline it.

3. Again, Examples provoke emulation; which is another strong Principle of activity; moving us earnestly to desire, (and thence eagerly to pursue) whatever good, privilege, or advantage we see another to enjoy. To observe another of the same nature and capacities with our selves to have shone with an illustrious virtue, to be consecrated to Posterity by a lasting fame, and to

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be

Melius homines exemplis docentur quam  
imprimi. h. e. boni habent quæ approbant,  
quæ præcipi fieri posse Plin. Jun. Paneg.

Adjungi se exemplis exoptat humana  
infirmity. quo facilius ipsa n. ne faciat,  
quæ alibi se esse ante co. noscat, dum ad-  
monetur auditu atas omnis fieri: offe-  
quod factum est. Salv. ad Eccl. Cath.

Sermo quidam virum & efficax exem-  
plum operis est. facile persuadens quod in-  
te. dimus, dum factibile probat esse quod  
suademus. Bern. de Refor. Serm. 3.

Ex aliorum factis fieri posse credunt,  
quod forte cum putant fieri non posse pi-  
græcant. Cyp. Ep. 1. 2. 2.

Fortis in armis  
Caesareis Labienus erat.

Chryl. T. 1. p. 77. T. 6. p. 148.  
T. 5. Orat. 101.

Φύσει γὰρ φιλόκορον ἔσαν τινὲς οὖσαν  
τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐν δὲ ὁ Κύριος, &c.



be crowned with glorious rewards above; what other reflections of thought can it produce in us, than such as these? shall he a man, like my self, endued with the same faculties; appetites and passions; subject to the same infirmities, temptations, needs, cares and encumbrances of life, shall he by noble dispositions of Soul, and worthy Performances render himself highly considerable; while I by sordid qualities, and unworthy Practices debase, and render my self despicable? shall he leave behind him monuments of eternal Praise, while I do nothing worthy of regard or memory? shall he enjoy the favour of the great God, and the comforts of a blessed Eternity, but I be wholly deprived of that joyful Estate, and plunged into endless sorrows, and desperate misery? shall a *Joseph* stoutly resist and overcome the strongest Temptations, and I be easily baffled by the least solicitation of Vice? shall a stripling *David* gloriously triumph over Giants, while I basely am vanquished by Dwarfs? shall *Job* be stripped of all his Goods with contentedness, and endure the most grievous Pains with Patience, while I am discomposed for any small loss, and dismayed by the least cross accident? shall *Abraham* here by his faith, and obedience attain to be called the Friend of God, and rest for ever in his glorious and happy Bosom, while I deservedly am refused the honour and comfort of that heavenly communion here, and shall hereafter be cast out from that blissful Presence into the dismal mansions of wretched folly and wickedness? Did *Paul*, once a stubborn Jew, a blind Pharisee, a grievous Blasphemer, a bloody Persecutor, by a seasonable Conversion repair his State, approve himself to God by an eminent zeal for his Glory, undergo restless Pains, run desperate hazards, and endure all sorts of distresses for the propagation of God's Heavenly truth, obtaining thence a never-fading crown of Glory in Heaven, and a perpetual renown upon Earth; and shall I then, who from my youth have been educated in the most true and holy religion, who have by solemn engagements devoted my self thereto; who may without any trouble, or danger profess and practise according to that holy discipline, proceed in wicked courses, provoking God's wrath, and attracting his vengeance upon me? No: since the capacities are alike, since the means are common, since the rewards of Piety are promiscuously exposed and offered unto all, why should I by deplorable perverseness or negligence suffer my self to be deprived of it and its benefits? Why shall not I become as good, as commendable, as happy as any other man? These are the conceits and voices of natural emulation, that mighty Passion (so often and by many effects it discovereth it self to be) implanted in our original constitution to be as a spur and incentive, stimulating and enflaming us unto the ready undertaking, and vigorous pursuit of good purposes; the which perhaps hath produced more noble effects, than any other Passion, or Inclination of our Souls: for all manner of excellency in knowledge, in prowess, in virtue how often doth it issue from this source? Doth not the admired fame of men notable for Learning (recorded in Story, or subject to present observation) and a jealousy of being surpassed in accomplishments competent to humane nature, sharpen the appetite, and rouse the industry of most Scholars, whom neither the love of know-

*Tentanda via est, quam quoque possim  
Dillere humo.*

Rom. 11. 14.  
10. 19.

ledge, nor its apparent usefulness could any-wise persuade to bear so much toil in acquit thereof? Do not all Histories acquaint us, that the most gallant enterprizes and exploits of famous Warriours have derived their beginning from an emulation of the glory purchased by their Ancestours? (wisdom and valour have thus especially been propagated; one Man's signal excellency being Parent to the like in many other.) And that this Passion may in like manner be subservient to the Production of Virtue and Piety, is plain enough from parity of reason, and from experience; and we have (for farther argument thereof) the *Apostles* Practice using it to this purpose: St. *Paul* employed it as an engine for the conversion of his dear countrymen; whom by railing in them a jealousy of being outstripped (in God's favour, and its effects) by the *Gentiles*, he endeavoureth to provoke to the embracing of the Christian Faith: *I speak to you Gentiles* (saith he) *in as much as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, I magnifie my Office, ei πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ ὡς τὴν ὁδοῦ, if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.* And St. *James* instigateth us unto fer-



fergency of Prayer, by minding us, that *Elias was a Man of like passions with* Jam. 5. 17. *our selves*; yet was able by his Prayers to shut and open Heaven, to procure barrenness and fertility to the Earth. And the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews* chargeth us, to *consider one another*, *εις παροτρυσμὸν ἀγάπης, ὡς καλῶν ἐργῶν* so as to *provoke one another* (or by mutual emulation to sharpen one another) *to charity and good works*.

4. Examples do work upon modesty, that *preserver and guardian of virtue*, as *Cicero* calls it. For every good Action of another doth upbraid, reproach and shame him, who acteth not conformably thereto. Can we without a trembling heart, and blushing forehead view the Practices of the ancient Saints, if ours be altogether unlike them? If they to please God, and secure their salvation did undergo such *prodigious* Pains in assiduous devotions, abstinencies, watchings, and we contrary-wise are extremely sluggish, cold and negligent in the Performance of our ordinary duties; if they willingly renounced all sensual complacencies, and we either cherish our selves in a soft delicacy of life, or wallow in a profane dissolution of manners; if they to free themselves from distracting cares, voluntarily disburthened themselves of all needless encumbrances, and we are wholly busie in *heaping up* wealth, and driving on worldly interests; if they gladly embraced and endured the sharpest Afflictions, and we are terrified by the thought, are overwhelmed by the sense of the least disappointment, or distastful occurrence; how can we without extream regret of mind, and confusion of face consider their Practice, or compare it with ours? It is a profligate impudence of him that can daily hear, and read the Stories of their doings, without being deeply sensible, and ashamed at the dissonance appearing between their course of life, and his.

5. Example awakens that curiosity, which is natural to us, and of no mean efficacy upon our Actions. For whatever we see done, we are apt to be inquisitive concerning it; why and to what purpose it is done, what the grounds are, and what the fruits of the Performance; especially if the matter seem considerably important, and the action proceedeth from a Person deserving respect; whereof having passed some competent judgment, we are by the same instinct of curiosity farther transported into a desire of discerning by our trial and experience whether the event correspondeth to our expectation; so are we easily induced to imitate the actions of others. By which means as vice ordinarily is conceived and propagated, (men by a preposterous and perverse curiosity being inveigled to try what they see others affect or enjoy) so may virtue also by the same means be engendred and nourished; the general ways of producing and maintaining those contrary habits being alike. As therefore, 'tis a great blemish and reproach to humane nature, that,

— *Faciles imitandis*  
*Turpibus & pravis omnes sumus* —

Juven.

we (as the *Satyrists* truly observeth of us) have a great proclivity to follow *naughty examples*; so there is from hence some amends, that we have also some inclination to imitate good and worthy Precedents; the which is somewhat more strong and vigorous, because countenanced and encouraged by the approbation of reason, our most noble faculty.

6. Examples also do please the mind and fancy in contemplation of them, thence drawing a considerable influence upon practice. No kind of studious entertainment doth so generally delight as History; or the tradition of remarkable examples: even those who have an abhorrency or indisposition toward other studies (who have no *genius* to apprehend the more intricate subtilties of Science; nor the patience to pursue rational consequences) are yet often much taken with historical narrations; these striking them with a delectable variety of accidents, with circumstantial descriptions, and sensible representations of objects, do greatly affect and delight their fancies; especially the relation of notable adventures, and rare accidents, is wont to be attended with great pleasure and satisfaction. And such are those, which present to us the lives and examples of holy men, abounding with wonders of providence and grace: no attempts so gallant, no exploits so illustrious as those, which have been achiev-



ed by the faith and patience, by the prudence and courage of the ancient Saints; they do far surpass the most famous achievements of *Pagan* Heroes. It was (I dare say) more wonderful, that *Abraham* with his retinue of Household Servants should vanquish four potent and victorious Kings; and that *Gideon* with three hundred unarmed men should discomfit a vastly numerous host; than that *Alexander* with a well appointed army of stout and expert Soldiers should overturn the *Persian* Empire. The Siege of *Jericho* is so far more remarkable, than those most famous ones of *Numantia*, and *Saguntus*, as it is more strange, that the blast of Trumpets, and the noise of People shouting should demolish Walls, than the shaking them with Rams, or discharging massy Stones against them. And he that carefully will compare the deeds of *Sampson* and *Hercules*, shall find, that one true exploit performed by the former doth much in force and strangeness surmount the twelve fabulous labours of the other: No triumphs indeed are comparable to those of Piety; no trophies are so magnificent and durable, as those which victorious faith erecteth: that history therefore which reports the *res gesta*, the acts and sufferings of most pious men, must in reason be esteemed not only the most useful, but also the most pleasant; yielding the sweetest entertainment to well disposed minds; wherein we see virtue expressed, not in bare *idea* only, but in actual life, strength, motion; in all its beauty and ornaments: than which no spectacle can be more stately; no object more grateful can be presented to the discerning eye of reason.

7. We may furthermore consider, that God hath provided and recommended to us one example, as a perfect standard of good practice, The example of our Lord; the which declareth the use and efficacy of good example, as one principal instrument of Piety. That indeed is the most universal, absolute and assured Pattern; yet doth it not supersede the use of other examples: Not only the valour and conduct of the General, but those of inferior Officers, yea, the resolution of common Souldiers do serve to animate their fellows: The Stars have their season to guide us, as well as the Sun; especially when our eyes are so weak, as hardly to bear the day. Even, considering our infirmity, inferior examples, by their imperfection sometime have a peculiar advantage. Our Lord's most imitable practice did proceed from an immense virtue of divine grace, which we cannot arrive to; it in itself is so perfect and high, that we may not ever reach it; looking upon it may therefore sometimes dazzle, and discourage our weakness; but other good men had assistances in measure, such as we may hope to approach unto; they were subject to the difficulties, which we feel; they were exposed to the perils of falling, which we fear: we may therefore hope to march on in a reasonable distance after them; we may, by help of the same grace, come near in transcribing their less exact Copy.

To conclude, Since upon so many accounts we are obliged to follow good examples; since they are of so great use towards our proceeding in the way to happiness; thence they conduce to the clear instruction of our understanding, to the forcibly inclining our reason, to the vehement excitement of our Passions, to the delightfully affecting our imagination in subserviency to good practice; let us make that due and profitable use of them, which we should and may do. Let us with diligent attention perusing the sacred history meditate upon the lives of holy men therein propounded as Patterns of a persevering Faith in God, and conscionable obedience to his commandments. Let the light of their exemplary practice in all kind of piety and virtue continually shine upon our souls, to direct our minds, to inflame our affections, to quicken our resolutions, to detect the errors, and correct the faults of our lives, that we imitating their virtuous and pious conversation, may partake of those comfortable rewards; of that joy, and bliss, whereof they rest possessed: The which God Almighty, and our Blessed Saviour the author and finisher of our Faith, by his gracious aid and blessing grant unto us; to whom be all glory and praise for ever and ever. Amen.



## S E R M O N III.

Abiding in Christ to be demonstrated by  
walking as Christ did.

I JOHN ii. 6.

*He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk as he walked.*

**T**O abide in Christ, to be in Christ, to put on Christ; and reciprocally Christ's being in us, living, dwelling, being formed in us; and the like expressions occurring in H. Scripture, do not denote any Physical inherence, or Essential conjunction between Christ and us (such as those who affect unintelligible mysteries rather than plain sense, would conceit) but only that mutual relation accruing from our profession of being Christ's Disciples, our being inserted into his body the Church, being governed by his Laws, partaking of his Grace, with all the privileges of the Gospel, relying upon his promises, and hoping for eternal salvation from him. By virtue of which relation we may be said in a mystical, or moral manner to be united to him, deriving strength and sustenance from him, as the members from the head, the branches from the tree, the other parts of the building from the foundation; by which similitudes this mysterious union is usually expressed in Scripture; in effect briefly, to be in, or to abide in Christ implyeth no more, but our being truly, in faith and practice, Christians; so that the meaning of St. John's words seemeth plainly and simply to be this: Whoever pretends to be a Christian (that is, to believe the Doctrine, and embrace the Discipline of Christ) ought to walk (that is, is obliged to order the whole course of his life and actions) as Christ walked (that is, as Christ did live and converse in the World:) Or, It is the duty of every one, professing Christianity, to conform his life to the pattern of Christ's life, to follow his example, to imitate his practice. This is the importance of the words, this the subject of our present discourse.

I. For illustration and confirmation of which point, we may observe, that the H. Apostles do, upon all occasions, assume this supposition, when they would persuade their Disciples to the practice of any virtue, or performance of any duty; enforcing their exhortations, by representing the practice of Christ, as an unquestionable ground of obligation, and an effectual inducement thereto. Hence they incite them to holiness: *But (saith St. Peter) as he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation: to Charity; And walk in love (saith St. Paul) as Christ also loved us: to Patience; Because (saith St. Peter) Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps. And Let us (saith the Apostle to the Hebrews) run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross: to humility; Let (saith St. Paul) the same mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation: to charitable compliance, and inoffensive demeanour toward others, intimated by St. Paul, when he says, Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved; Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ; and again,*

*Let*



Rom. 15. 2. *Let every one please his neighbour for his good to edification; for even Christ pleased not himself.* Thus do the *Apostles* take all occasion, from the like practice of *Christ*, to perswade the performance of duty; and the strength of their argument lyeth upon the evidence of this supposition, that all professing themselves *Christians* are especially obliged to imitate *Christ's* example. And their Authority may be backed and enforced by several reasons.

II. Doing so hath a reasonableness and decency grounded upon our relations to *Christ*: it is fit and comely that the manners of the Disciple should be regulated by those of his Master; that the Servant should not, in his garb and demeanour, dissent or vary from his Lord; that the Subject should conform his humour to the fashion of his Prince; especially that we should thus comply and conform to such a Master, such a Lord, such a Prince, whom (upon highest considerations) by a most voluntary choice, and in a most solemn manner we have absolutely devoted our selves unto: This reason our Lord himself doth urge: *Ye* (saith he to his Disciples) *call me Master, and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am; if I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one anothers feet.*

III. Following *Christ's* example is requisite to demonstrate the sincerity of our faith, love and reverence to him. It is the most natural way of testifying affection and respect to imitate the manners of those persons, who are the objects of those acts and dispositions; to esteem what they approve, to delight in what they affect, and consequently (since actions do proceed from affections) to do as they do. Contrary actions are plain arguments of contrary judgments, inclinations and affections: Who can imagine we sincerely believe in *Christ*, or heartily love him, or truly honour him, that seeth us to loath what he liked, or affect what he detested; to contemn what he prized, or value what he despised; to neglect what he pursued, or embrace what he avoided? but if our lives resemble his, any Man will thence collect our respect and affection to him: this argument our Saviour doth also intimate: *By this* (saith he) *shall all men know ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another*; that is, it will be an evident sign and strong argument, that ye really do believe in, love and honour me, if ye imitate me in my charity.

IV. By pretending to be *Christians* we acknowledge the transcendent goodness, worth and excellency of our Saviour; that he was incomparably better, and wiser than any person ever was, or could be; that he always acted with the highest reason, out of the most excellent disposition of mind, in order to the best purposes; and that his practice therefore reasonably should be the rule and pattern of ours. For the best and exactest in every kind is the measure of the rest. All that would obtain exquisite skill in any Art, or Faculty, think best to imitate the works of the best Masters therein; A Painter to draw after the pieces of *Zeuxis* or *Apelles* (of *Raphael*, or *Titian*;) an Oratour to speak in the style of *Cicero*, or *Demosthenes*; a Souldier to emulate the military Achievements of *Hannibal*, or *Cæsar*: in like manner, reason requireth, if we would live well and happily, that we should endeavour to conform our practice to that of our Saviour, the most perfect mirror of all virtue and goodness.

V. The practice of our Saviour did thoroughly agree with his Doctrine and Law; he requireth nothing of us which he did not eminently perform himself.

Οὐδὲν ὑπερέβηεν τὸ κατὰ λόγον φιλοσοφῆσαι. Chrys.

Ὡς τὸ βῆμα τὸ τρέχει κατὰ νόμον. Naz.

Luc. 11. 46.

He fulfilled in deed as well as taught in word all righteousness. He was not *ignava opera*, *Philosophia sententia*; like those Masters of Philosophy, so frequently taxed and derided by the *Satyrist*s; who, by a horrid garb, supercilious looks, and loud declamations, would seem to discountenance those vices which themselves practised; nor like those hypocritical Lawyers in the Gospel, who laded other men with heavy burthens, such as themselves would not touch with one of their fingers: No, he imposed nothing on us, which he did not first bear upon his own shoulders: the strictness of his life did, in all respects, correspond with the severity of his Precepts; or rather did indeed much exceed them. They therefore who pretend to believe his doctrine, and avow themselves bound to observe his Law, are consequently engaged to follow his practice, in which his Doctrine and Law are signally exemplified.

VI. It



VI. It being the design of divine goodness, in sending our Saviour, to render us good and happy, to deliver us from sin and misery, to instruct us in the knowledge, and excite us to the practice of all virtue; and thereby to qualify us for the enjoyment of a blessed immortality; effecting all this in a way agreeable to our natural condition and capacity; there could not be devised any more powerful means, or more convenient method of accomplishing those excellent purposes, than by propounding such an example, and obliging us to comply therewith: the which may appear, 1. by considering in general the advantage and efficacy that good example is apt to have upon practice; 2. by weighing the peculiar excellency of our Saviour's example above all others, in order to those ends; and 3. by surveying the particular instances of imitable goodness represented in the life of our Saviour.

1. Good example is naturally an effectual instrument of good practice; for that it doth most compendiously, pleasantly and easily instruct; representing things to be done at one view, in a full body, clothed with all their modes and circumstances; it recommends them to us, by the most plain and plausible way of reasoning, (and withal the most sure and safe) the authority of wise and good men; it encourageth, by evidently declaring the practicableness of rules prescrib'd; it kindleth and rouseth mens courage, by a kind of contagion, as one flame doth kindle another; it raiseth a worthy emulation of doing laudable things, which we see done; or of obtaining a share in the commendations and rewards of virtue. It urgeth modesty, breeding shame and regret in them who act contrarily thereto; it awakeneth curiosity, thereby producing a desire to make trial of what it proposeth; it affecteth and pleaseth the fancy, thereby insinuating an approbation, admiration and liking of the good things, which it representeth; briefly, it exciteth and engageth all our passions, setting on work all those powerful springs of activity; it consequently is, in its own nature, an efficacious mean of good practice. This we may in general say of all good examples; but,

2. More especially the example of *Christ* doth in efficacy and influence upon good practice, surpass all others; upon several accompts.

*First*, In that it is a sure and infallible rule; an entire and perfect rule of practice; deficient in no part, swerving in no circumstance from truth and right, which privileges are competent to no other example. The practice of the best men is not always to be imitated, nor ever absolutely as a certain ground of action; it is to be (so far as we have ability) considered, examined and compared to more certain rules; (the Divine Laws, and the Principles of right Reason) according to their agreement with which they are to be followed; they are indeed (before trial of the case) probable arguments of what is done by them being good and lawful; they do outweigh slender and obscure reasonings about the goodness of things; they may, when opportunity, leisure, or ability of farther enquiry and judgment about things are wanting, serve to direct us; but they are not thoroughly sure rules, or perfect measures of our duty. We should beware lest we be seduced even by holy persons; and therefore with circumspection and caution should peruse their story, and contemplate their demeanour; whereof those which are explicitly commended, or allowed by the divine judgment, we may, being assured that we are in the same circumstances, safely follow (taking them for monitories, encouragements and excitements to our duty) but those that are directly condemned by the same sentence, or apparently devious from God's Law, we as carefully should avoid; such as are of a doubtful and unaccountable nature we are to suspend about, and not to ground upon; nor to argue from the fact to the rightfulness of them; the safest way being always (as we are able) to have recourse to the simple, plain and perspicuous precepts of God, and dictates of reason. For the best men have been always subject to errors and infirmities; the fountain of original corruption in them was never so dried up, or closely stopped, but that some impure streams have bubbled forth; the fire of natural concupiscence was never so utterly quenched, but that sometimes it would blaze, or smoke out in bad actions; that intestine enemy (the flesh) was never thoroughly subdued, nor the body of sin quite slain and mortified in any other mortal

*It was ill said of Seneca: Catoni  
brius Obsecra est, & facilius efficit,  
quisquis obsecrat hoc crimen, honestum,  
quam turpem Catonem.*



mortal man: Good men have ever had some foul spots, or deforming wrinkles appearing in the beauteous face of their conversation; they have had their inequalities and indispositions of humour; their ebbs of devotion; their fits of sloth; their wanton freaks; their slips often, and sometimes their falls; they have been subject to be deluded by mistake, to be surprized by inadvertency, to be transported by passion, to be swayed by temper, to be biased by interest; to be allured by temptation into false and unwarrantable proceedings; they might sometime fail in the substance, oftner in the degree, in the manner, in the circumstances of action; we find them often complaining of their proneness to do amiss, bemoaning the wretched frailty of their state; yea often repenting and bitterly mourning for their actual transgressions: There hardly is any Saint; recorded in Scripture, without some blemish in his actions; which shews our weakness, and ingageth us to be wary. They were indeed endowed with sufficient competencies of divine light and graces suitable to their private needs, or to the publick exigencies of their times, places, occasions and affairs; but not with the perfection and extream degrees thereof, requisite to preserve them from all miscarriage; so that we are not always, or in all cases, to conform our actions to their examples: We must not learn to equivocate of *Abraham*, nor to circumvent of *Jacob*, nor to be cholerick of *Moses*, (so as in our excess of passion to break the Tables of the Divine Law) nor of *Eli* to be fondly affectionate, or indulgent to our relations, nor of *David* to utter uncharitable imprecations; nor to dissemble of *St. Peter*; nor of *St. Paul* to revile Magistrates: The use we are to make of many practices, of most eminently pious men, is not to be misguided by them into wrong paths; not by them to authorize, or excuse our presumptuous misdeeds; but to make us to admire, and to rely upon the Divine Mercy, which so graciously did overlook and pardon their offences; to provoke us to an imitation of their repentance; to render us watchful in shunning those rocks, upon which persons, so skilful in the conduct of their lives, have dashed; to engage us to humility, by considering so manifest arguments of our frailty, and our being obnoxious to greater and more frequent miscarriages.

Heb. 7. 26.  
1 Pet. 1. 19.  
Heb. 4. 15.  
1 Pet. 2. 22.  
Joh. 3. 34.

Act. 10.

But as to our Saviour's example, the case is quite different; for though he did Miracles as God, he commanded as *Christ*; he did many heroical things in discharge of his office, &c. in which things, we cannot, or may not imitate him; yet whatever in his life was in its own nature imitable by us, which did not exceed our natural powers, nor disagree with our condition and quality; whatever he as Man, in a private capacity, as subject to the Divine Law, with regard thereto performed, we may with all freedom, confidence and security imitate; nor can so doing incur any danger of error, or guilt; for we cannot, without great folly and impiety, suspect any fault, or imperfection in his most pure, righteous and innocent life: He was *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners*: He was a *lamb without blemish and without spot*; He was *in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin*. He did no sin, nor was any guile found in his mouth. God gave him of his Spirit not by measure: these are the voices and elogies of the Sacred Oracles concerning him. The heavenly extraction, even of his humanity, derived no original contagion from our polluted stock, and rendred him free from the common incentives of evil concupiscence. The inseparable presence of the Divinity with him (*for God was with him*, as *St. Peter* expressed it) and the unrestrained effusion of the H. Spirit upon him did preserve him from all defilements of infectious conversation in this World; a clear evidence of divine light always shining in his Soul, directed him infallibly in the paths of truth and righteousness: No tempest of cross accidents without, nor any estuations of internal passion could discompose the steady calm and serenity of his mind; no allurements of worldly pleasure, nor temptation of profit could pervert his practice, or seduce his heart, being enflamed with most intense love of God, and entire charity to men: so that his example must needs be a perfect rule and sure direction to us. Which consideration cannot but yield great encouragement and comfort in following him; freeing us from all anxious doubt, and suspicion of mistake in our spiritual progress; like the presence of a sure guide to the bewildred Traveller; like the appearance of a Star to the weather-beaten Mariner; like that miraculous Pillar



Pillar of Fire, which safely conducted the wandring *Israelites* through the unknown and unfrequented Passages of a wild Defart. But farther,

*Secondly*, The peculiar excellency of our Lord's Example appears, in that he was, by the Divine Providence, to this very purpose designed, and sent into the World, as well by his Practice as by his Doctrine, to be the guide and master of holy life, and obedience to all men; and did accordingly propound to himself this end of his actions, that he might be imitated

by his Disciples. So he declareth himself, as to some considerable passages of his life, and thence, by reasonable inference, we may suppose the same of the rest, so far as they might be conducive to the same end; especially, since of some performances, no other, or no so probable account can be given, as that they were done for exemplarity: For why should he fast, who had no sins to be repented of, no rebellious flesh to be tamed, no intemperate desires to be mortify'd, no coldness of devotion to be enlivened thereby? And why did he offer himself to be Baptized, who had no original stain to be cleansed of, no fault to be forgiven, no want of special grace to be conferr'd? Why, but by his exemplary fulfilling all righteousness, to teach us ready obedience to all Divine Institutions, and peaceable compliance with all laudable customs: So an ancient Writer wisely descanteth upon those Practices of our Saviour: *He was* (saith that Writer) *Baptized,*

*and fasted, not because he had need of any cleansing, or fasting, who in nature was pure and holy; but that he might attest to the truth of St. John, and might exhibit a pattern to us. What* induc'd him to condescend to such a mis-beseeming employment to appearance, as the washing of his disciples feet, he doth himself tell us: *If I then* (saith he) *your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one anothers feet; for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you.* This was his professed scope and drift, in that admirable deportment of his, to teach us humility, charity and condescension toward the meanest of our Brethren. What did those exuberant instances of charity, practised by him, import? this especially, that we should imitate them; hither he drives them; *This* (saith he) *is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.* Why was he, in his disposition, so meek and gentle, in his conversation so humble and lowly? to this purpose, that we might of him learn those excellent qualities: *Learn of me* (saith he) *for I am meek and lowly in heart.* And St. Peter saith, *That Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps;* signifying, that he designed his patience to be exemplary to us. If then our Saviour, in his humility, his charity, his meekness, his patience, intended his life to be exemplary, and expressly propounded it as such; then certainly, in his devotion, his self-denial, his justice, in all other virtues he had the same intention; and what he intended, God designed to be; and what God designed to be, was doubtless eminently conducive to the end designed; and therefore our Saviour's life was most exemplary. Other Saints indeed were of very exemplary conversation, but either proved to be so, according to ordinary course of providence, without any peculiar designation thereto (their free choice conspiring, with God's Grace, in producing good works shining before men) or at most, by a restrained determination to some particular time, place or people; as *Moses* was chosen and appointed to conduct the *Israelites*; *David* was taken from the sheepfold, and following the ewes great with young, to feed Jacob God's people, and *Israel* his inheritance; *Jeremy* was sanctified from his birth, and ordained to be a Prophet of the Nations in his times, and St. *Paul* was separated from the womb to be a Preacher of the Christian Faith: these, and such like eminent persons, Almighty God, in his goodness, was pleased to raise up, to be, in their generations, as it were partial and temporary Saviours, as by declaring his will, and revealing his truth to men, so by guiding them with a remarkable example; these *burning and shining* \* *Lamps* (as St. *John* the Baptist is called) were indeed, like lamps set up in some particular families, with a competent lustre, to dispel the present darkness, shining within their definite sphere, and for a determinate time; but our Saviour, like the Sun, fixed in a higher orb, was ordained with a perpetual and unconfined splendour to illuminate the Universe; to cause a general and

Διὰ τὸτο καὶ αὐτὸς ἐνήσειεν ἐν αὐτοῖς ταύτης δεικνύων, ἀλλ' ἡμᾶς παιδεύων. Chryl. Tom. 2. p. 81.

Ἐκαστὸν καὶ ἐνήσειεν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀπορρησάμενος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ χρείαν ἔχων καὶ ἀπορρησάμενος τὴν οὐσίαν καὶ ἀπορρησάμενος τὴν ἀγίαν, ἀλλ' ἵνα ἡ ἀντιλήθειαν περὶ μαρτυρήσῃ καὶ ἡμῖν ὑπογεγραμμένην παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ.

John. 15. 12.

Matt. 11. 2.

1 Pet. 2. 21.

Acts 7. 35.

Psal. 106. 23.

Psal. 78. 70.

Jer. 1. 5.

Joh. 5. 35.

\* Λύχνος ὁ

καίόμενος καὶ

φάνωρ.



everlasting day of healthful and comfortable knowledge over the face of the whole earth. He was *that true light, which enlighteneth every man coming into the world; He was prepared before the face of all people, to be a light to lighten the Nations* (not Israel only, but the Nations indefinitely, or all Nations.) He was ordained, not Commander of a single Regiment, or Party, but Captain-General of all Mankind, to conduct all those who were disposed to follow him, by a victorious obedience, into that triumphant state of everlasting joy and happiness. His example doth belong unto us all without exception, by divine ordination; for *we, all of us, were* (to use St. Paul's expression) *predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son; that he might be the first-born among many brethren.* So it was, and so it became the infinite goodness, and philanthropy of God, to bestow upon mankind one perfectly good example, inviting to all virtue, and so fit to countervail all those many bad ones, wherewith we converse, enticing to vice; to set forth, among so many imperfect ones, one accomplished piece of his heavenly workmanship; able to attract the eyes, and ravish'd the hearts of all men with admiration of its excellent worth and beauty; to offer to our view some discernible representation of his invisible perfections; that so we might better be induced and inured to apprehend, love, reverence and imitate himself, by contemplation of that most exquisite image of him; to give an evident proof, that the highest virtue is not unpracticable, that humane nature, by aid and guidance of the Divine Spirit, may arrive to the sublimest pitch of perfection in goodness; in fine, to expose such a common, sweet and lovely pattern, as we with assurance, joy and comfort may follow.

Joh. 5. 10.  
 Ἄ γὰρ αὐτὸς  
 ἐκείνου τοῦ  
 ταύτα καὶ οὐ  
 δεῖ ὁμοίως  
 ποιεῖν.

*Thirdly*, Our Saviour's example is especially influential upon practice, in that it was, by an admirable temperament, more accommodated for imitation than any others have been. That the perfect copy of his most holy life seems more easie to be transcribed, than the ruder draughts of other holy Men; for though it were written with an incomparable fairness, delicacy and evenness; not flurred with any foul blot, nor any where declining from exact straightness; yet were the lineaments thereof exceeding plain and simple; not by any gaudy flourishes, or impertinent intrigues rendred difficult, to studious imitation; so that even women and children, the weakest and meanest sort of people, as well as the most wise and ingenuous, might easily perceive its design, and with good success write after it. His was a gentle and steady light, bright indeed, but not dazzling the eye; warm, but not scorching the face of the most intent beholder; No affected singularities, no supercilious morosities, no frivolous ostentations of seemingly high, but really fruitless performances; nothing that might deter a timorous, discourage a weak, or offend a scrupulous disciple, is observable in his practice: but on the contrary, his conversation was full of lowliness and condescension, of meekness and sweetness, of openness and candid simplicity; apt to invite and allure all men to approach toward it, and with satisfaction to enjoy it. He did not seclude himself into the constant retirements of a Cloyster, nor into the farther recesses of a Wilderness (as some others have done) but conversed freely and indifferently with all sorts of men, even the most contemptible and odious sort of men, *Publicans* and *Sinners*; like the Sun, with an impartial bounty, liberally imparting his pleasant light and comfortable warmth to all. He used no uncouth austerities in habit, or diet, but complied, in his garb, with ordinary usage, and sustained his life with such food as casual opportunity did offer; so that his indifferency, in that kind, yielded matter of obloquy against him from the fond admirers of a humorous preciseness. His Devotions, (though exceedingly sprightly and fervent) were not usually extended to a tedious and exhausting durance, nor strained into ecstatic transports, charming the natural senses, and overpowering the reason; but calm, steady and regular, such as Persons of honest intention and hearty desire (though not endued with high fancy, or stirring passion) might readily imitate. His zeal was not violent or impetuous, except upon very great reason, and extraordinary occasion, when the honour of God, or good of Men, was much concerned. He was not rigorous in the observance of traditional rites and customs, (such as were needlessly burthenfome, or which contained



*Fourthly*, The transcendent excellency of our Lord's example appeareth, in that it is attended with the greatest obligations (of gratitude and ingenuity, of justice, of interest, of duty) mightily engaging us to follow it. For 'tis not the example of an ordinary, or inconsiderable Person; of a stranger, of one indifferent, or unrelated to us; but of a glorious Prince, of heavenly extraction; (the first-born Son of the Almighty God, sole heir of eternal Majesty) of our Lord and Master, to whom we are for ever bound, by indispensable bands of duty and obedience; of our great Captain, who hath undertaken to subdue our enemies, and hath obliged us to follow his conduct, in a holy warfare, against them, by most solemn sacraments and vows; of our best friend, from whom we have received the greatest favours and benefits imaginable; of our most gracious Saviour, who, for our sake, hath voluntarily sustained most bitter pains, and shameful contumelies; having sacrificed his dearest heart-blood to redeem us from intolerable slaveries, and from extremities of horrible misery; of him, to whom, in all respects, we do owe the highest respect, love and observance that can be: Now it is the nature and property both of respect and love (such as upon so many grounds we owe to him) to beget in the person respecting and loving, an endeavour (answerable to the degrees of those dispositions) of conforming to, and resembling the qualities and manners of the person respected, or beloved. We see how readily Children do comply with the customs of their Parents and Tutors; Servants of their Masters and Patrons; Subjects of their Princes and Governours, with a studious earnestness composing themselves to express in their carriage, not only their good or their indifferent fashions and manners, but even their most palpable deformities and vices; inasmuch, that a whole family, a city, a nation may be debauch'd from its sobriety, or reform'd from its dissoluteness, even instantly, by the example of one person, who, by his place, power and authority, challengeth extraordinary reverence from men: and much greater influence hath hearty love to transform our manners into an agreement with the manners of him we love: *What a man loves, that he imi-*

"(ὁ γὰρ ὅς ἐστις ἀ-  
παῖς καὶ μι-  
μῆται ὅσον  
οἰόντες. Hier.



*tateth so much as lies in his power, saith Hierocles, truly.* For love being founded on a good esteem, and a benevolent inclination thence resulting, engageth the affectionate person to admire the qualities of him he affecteth, to observe his deportments, to make the most advantageous construction of what he doeth; to fancy he doeth all things with best reason and discretion; to deem therefore, that all his actions deserve and require imitation: hence doth love either find, or soon produce a competent similitude in the parties, (a similitude of mind, of will, of inclination and affection; an *Eadem velle & nolle*;) It doth forcibly attract as to a vicinity of place and converse, so to an agreement of affections and actions; it uniteth the most distant, it reconcileth the most opposite, it turneth the most discordant natures into a sweet consent, and harmony of disposition and demeanour. We then having the greatest reason both to honour and love our Saviour, surely his example being duly studied and considered by us, must needs obtain a superlative influence upon our practice, and be very powerful to conform, and assimilate it to his.

These considerations may suffice, to shew the peculiar excellency of our Saviour's example in vertue, and efficacy upon our practice; the same more abundantly might be deduc'd from a survey of the most considerable particulars, in which we may and ought to imitate him. But the time will not suffer us to launch forth into so vast a sea of discourse. I shall only therefore, from the premisses, exhort, That if any earnest desire of happiness, any high esteem of virtue, any true affection to genuine sanctity do lodge in our breasts, we should apply this most excellent means of attaining them; the study and endeavour of imitating the Life of our Lord: If we have in us any truth and sincerity, and do not vainly prevaricate in our profession of being *Christ's* Disciples, and votaries of that most Holy Institution, let us manifest it by a real conformity to the practice of him who is our Master, and author of our faith: If we have in us any wisdom, or sober consideration of things, let us employ it in following the steps of that infallible guide, designed by heaven to lead us in the streight, even and pleasant ways of righteousness, unto the possession of everlasting bliss: If we do verily like, and approve the practice of *Christ*, and are affected with the innocent, sweet and lovely comeliness thereof, let us declare such our mind by a sedulous care to resemble it. If we bear any honour and reverence, any love and affection to *Christ*; if we are at all sensible of our relations, our manifold obligations, our duties to our great Lord, our best friend, our most gracious Redeemer; let us testify it by a zealous care to become like to him: Let a lively image of his most righteous and innocent, most holy and pious, most pure and spotless life be ever present to our fancies; so, as to inform our judgments, to excite our affections, to quicken our endeavours, to regulate our purposes, to correct our mistakes, to direct, amend and sanctifie our whole lives. Let us, with incessant diligence of study, meditate upon the best of histories, wherein the tenour of his divine practice is represented to us; revolving frequently in our thoughts all the most considerable passages thereof, entertaining them with devout passions, impressing them on our memories, and striving to express them in our conversations; let us endeavour continually to walk in the steps of our Lord, and to follow the *Lamb whithersoever he goeth*; which that we may be able to do, do thou, O Blessed Redeemer, draw us, draw us by the cords of thy love; draw us by the sense of thy goodness; draw us by the incomparable worth and excellency of thy person; draw us by the unspotted purity and beauty of thy example; draw us by the merit of thy precious death, and by the power of thy Holy Spirit; *Draw us, good Lord, and we shall run after thee.* Amen.

Col. after  
Eph. 2.

*Almighty God, who hast given thine only Son, to be unto us, both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly Life; give us grace, that we may always most thankfully receive that his inestimable benefit; and also daily endeavour our selves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.* Amen.

S E R:



## S E R M O N I V.

## Of Submission to the Divine Will.

LUKE xxii. 42.

*Nevertheless let not my will, but thine be done.*

Matt. 26. 39.

**T**HE great controversie, managed with such earnestness and obstinacy between God and Man, is this, whose will shall take place, his or ours: Almighty God, by whose constant protection and great mercy we subsist, doth claim to himself the authority of regulating our practice, and disposing our fortunes; but we affect to be our own Masters and Carvers; not willingly admitting any Law, not patiently brooking any Condition, which doth not sort with our fancy and pleasure: to make good his right, God bendeth all his forces, and applieth all proper means both of sweetness and severity (persuading us by arguments, soliciting us by entreaties, alluring us by fair promises, scaring us by fierce menaces, indulging ample benefits to us, inflicting sore corrections on us, working in us and upon us by secret influences of grace, by visible dispensations of Providence) yet so it is, that commonly nothing doth avail, our will opposing it self with invincible resolution and stiffness.

Here indeed the business pincheth; herein as the chief worth, so the main difficulty of religious practice consisteth, in bending *that iron sinew*; in bringing our proud hearts to stoop, and our sturdy humours to buckle, so as to surrender and resign our wills to the just, the wise, the gracious will of our God, prescribing our duty, and assigning our lot unto us. We may accuse our nature, but it is our pleasure; we may pretend weakness, but it is wilfulness, which is the guilty cause of our misdemeanours; for by God's help (which doth always prevent our needs, and is never wanting to those who seriously desire it) we may be as good as we please, if we can please to be good; there is nothing within us that can resist, if our wills do yield themselves up to duty: to conquer our reason is not hard; for what reason of man can withstand the infinite cogency of those motives, which induce to obedience? What can be more easie, than by a thousand arguments, clear as day, to convince any man, that to cross God's will is the greatest absurdity in the world, and that there is no madness comparable thereto? Nor is it difficult, if we resolve upon it, to govern any other part or power of our nature; for what cannot we do, if we are willing? what inclination cannot we check, what appetite cannot we restrain, what passion cannot we quell or moderate; what faculty of our soul, or member of our body is not obsequious to our will? Even half the resolution with which we pursue vanity and sin, would serve to engage us in the ways of wisdom and virtue.

Wherefore in overcoming our will the stress lieth; this is that impregnable fortress, which everlastingly doth hold out against all the batteries of reason and of grace; which no force of persuasion, no allurements of favour, no discouragement of terror can reduce: this puny, this impotent thing it is, which grappleth with Omnipotency, and often in a manner baffleth it: And no wonder; for that God doth not intend to overpower our will, or to make any violent impression on it, but only to *draw it* (as it is in the Prophet) *with the cords of a man*, or by rational inducements to win its consent and compliance;

our

Chrys. To u.

6. Or. 12. in

1 Cor. Or. 17.

Tom. 5. Or. 28.

43.

Quodcunque

sibi imperavit

animus obtinuit.

It. Sen. de Ira.

2. 12.

Hof. 1.



our service is not so considerable to him, that he should extort it from us; nor doth he value our happiness at so low a rate, as to obtrude it on us. His victory indeed were no true victory over us, if he should gain it by main force, or without the concurrence of our will; our works not being our works, if they do not issue from our will; and our will not being our will, if it be not free; to compel it were to destroy it, together with all the worth of our virtue and obedience: wherefore the Almighty doth suffer himself to be withstood,

<sup>Επει οὗτο καὶ αὐτὰ διαβάλλει τὰ ἀγαθὰ εἰ μὴ τοιαύτη αὐτῶν ἔσιν ἡ φύσις, ὥς καὶ ἐκόντας προσδεχόμεν. καὶ χάριν ἔχον πολλὰ. Chrys. in 1 Cor. Orat. 2.</sup>

and beareth repulses from us; nor commonly doth he master our will otherwise, than by its own spontaneous conversion and submission to him: if ever we be conquer'd, as we shall share in the benefit, and wear a crown; so we must join in the combat, and partake of the victory, by subduing our selves: *we must take the yoke upon us*; for God is only served by volunteers; he summoneth us by his Word, he attracteth us by his Grace, but we must *freely come unto him*.

Our will indeed of all things is most our own; the only gift, the most proper sacrifice we have to offer; which therefore God doth chiefly desire, doth most highly prize, doth most kindly accept from us. Seeing then our duty chiefly moveth on this hinge, the free submission and resignation of our will to the will of God; it is this practice, which our Lord (who came to guide us in the way to happiness, not only as a teacher by his word and excellent doctrine, but as a leader, by his actions and perfect example) did especially set before us; as in the constant tenour of his life, so particularly in that great exigency which occasioned these words, wherein, renouncing and deprecating his own will, he did express an entire submission to God's will, a hearty complacency therein, and a serious desire that it might take place.

For the fuller understanding of which case, we may consider, that our Lord, as partaker of our nature, and, *in all things, (barring sin) like unto us*, had a natural humane will, attended with senses, appetites and affections, apt from objects incident to receive congruous impressions of pleasure and pain; so that whatever is innocently grateful and pleasant to us, that he relish'd with delight, and thence did incline to embrace; whatever is distastful and afflictive to us, that he resented with grief, and thence was moved to eschew; to this probably he was liable in a degree beyond our ordinary rate; for that in him nature was most perfect, his complexion very delicate, his temper exquisitely sound and fine; for so we find, that by how much any man's constitution is more sound, by so much he hath a smarter gust of what is agreeable or offensive to nature: If perhaps sometimes infirmity of body, or distemper of soul (a savage ferity, a stupid dulness, a fondness of conceit, or stiffness of humour, supported by wild opinions, or vain hopes) may keep men from being thus affected by sensible objects; yet in him pure nature did work vigorously, with a clear apprehension and lively sense, according to the design of our maker, when into our constitution he did implant those passive faculties, disposing objects to affect them so and so, for our need and advantage; if this be deemed weakness, it is a weakness connexed with our nature, which he therewith did take, and *with which*

<sup>Επει καὶ αὐτὸς τὸς πεινῶντας καὶ ἀδυνατοῦν. Heb. 5. 2.</sup>

<sup>Heb. 4. 15. 1. 10, 18.</sup>

(as the *Apostle* saith) *he was encompassed*. Such a will our Lord had, and it was requisite he should have it; that he thence might be qualified to discharge the principal instances of obedience, for procuring God's favour to us, and for setting an exact pattern before us; for God imposing on him duties to perform, and dispensing accidents to endure, very cross to that natural will, in his compliance and acquiescence thereto, his obedience was thoroughly tried; his virtue did shine most brightly; therefore (as the *Apostle* saith) *he was in all points tempted*; thence, as to meritorious capacity, and exemplary influence, *he was perfected through suffering*.

<sup>Heb. 10. 7. Psal. 40. 7. Joh. 6. 38. 5. 30. 4. 34.</sup>

Hence was the whole course of his life and conversation among men, so designed, so modelled, as to be one continual exercise of thwarting that humane will, and closing with the divine pleasure: it was predicted of him, *Loe I come to do thy will O God*; and of himself he affirmed, *I came down from Heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me*; whereas therefore such a practice is little seen in achieving easie matters, or in admitting pleasant occurrences; it was ordered for him, that he should encounter the roughest difficulties,



faculties, and be engaged in circumstances, most harsh to natural apprehension and appetite; so that if we trace the footsteps of his life from the fordid manger to the bloody cross, we can hardly mark any thing to have befallen him apt to satisfy the will of nature. Nature liketh respect, and loatheth contempt; therefore was he born of mean Parentage, and in a most homely condition; therefore did he live in no garb, did assume no office, did exercise no power, did meddle in no affairs, which procure to men consideration and regard; therefore an impostor, a blasphemer, a forcerer, a loose companion, a seditious incendiary were the titles of honour, and the elogies of praise conferred on him; therefore was he exposed to the lash of every slanderous, every scurrilous, every petulant and ungoverned tongue.

Nature doth affect the good opinion, and good will of men, especially when due in grateful return for great courtesie and beneficence; nor doth any thing more grate thereon, than abuse of kindness; therefore, could he (the world's great friend and benefactor) say, *the world hateth me*; therefore were those, *Joh. 5. 18, 23* whom he, with so much charity and bounty had instructed, had fed, had cured of diseases (both corporal and spiritual) so ready to clamour, and commit outrage upon him; therefore could he thus expostulate, *Many good works have I shewed you from my father, for which of those works do ye stone me?* *Joh. 10. 31* therefore did his kindred slight him, therefore did his disciples abandon him, therefore did the grand traitor issue from his own bosome; therefore did that whole Nation, which he chiefly sought and laboured to save, conspire to persecute him, with most rancorous spite and cruel misusage. *Joh. 13. 18*

Nature loveth plentiful accommodations, and abhorreth to be pinched with any want; therefore was extreme penury appointed to him; he had no revenue, no estate, no certain livelihood, not *so much as a house where to lay his head*, or a piece of money to discharge the tax for it; he owed his ordinary support to alms, or voluntary beneficence; he was to seek his food from a *fig-tree on the way*; and sometimes was beholden for it to the courtesie of Publicans; *Luc. 8. 3.* *δι' ἡμᾶς ἐπιβόησεν, he was (saith St. Paul) a beggar for us.* *2 Cor. 8. 9*

Nature delighteth in ease, in quiet, in liberty; therefore did he spend his days in continual labour, in restless travel, in endless vagrancy, *going about and doing good*; ever hastening thither, whither the needs of men did call, or their benefit invite; therefore did he *take on him the form of a servant*, and was among his own followers *as one that ministrETH*; therefore he *pleased not himself*, but suited his demeanour to the state and circumstances of things, complied with the manners and fashions, comported with the humours and infirmities of men. *Joh. 4. 16; Matt. 4. 23; 8. 35; Act. 10. 38; Phil. 2. 7; Luc. 22. 27; Marc. 6. 6; Matt. 21. 28*

Nature coveteth good success to its designs and undertakings, hardly brooking to be disappointed and defeated in them: therefore was he put to water dry sticks, and to wash *Negroes*; that is, to instruct a most dull and stupid, to reform a most perverse and stubborn generation; therefore his ardent desires, his solicitous cares, his painful endeavours for the good of men did obtain so little fruit; had indeed a contrary effect, rather aggravating their sins than removing them, rather hardening than turning their hearts, rather plunging them deeper into perdition, than rescuing them from it: therefore so much in vain did he, in numberless miraculous works, display his power and goodness, convincing few, converting fewer by them; therefore although he taught with most powerful authority, with most charming gracefulness, with most convincing evidence, yet, *Who (could he say) hath believed our report?* though he most earnestly did invite and allure men to him, offering the richest boons that heaven it self could dispense, yet, *Ye will not (was he forced to say) come unto me, that ye may be saved*; although with assiduous fervency of affection he strove to reclaim them from courses tending to their ruin, yet how he prospered, sad experience declareth, and we may learn from that doleful complaint, *How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, but ye would not*: *ἐκ ἡδεύσατε*, your will did not concur, your will did not submit. *Luc. 4. 22, 23; Joh. 12. 38; Joh. 5. 40; Luc. 13. 34; 19. 42*

In fine, natural will seeketh pleasure, and shunneth pain; But what pleasure did he taste; what inclination, what appetite, what sense did he gratifie? How did



Marc. 1. 13. did he feast, or revel? How, but in tedious fastings, in frequent hungers, by  
 35. Luc. 5. 16. passing whole nights in prayer, and retirement for devotion upon the cold  
 Joh. 4. 6. 31. mountains? What sports had he, what recreation did he take, but feeling in-  
 Luc. 6. 12. cessant gripes of compassion, and wearisome roving in quest of the lost sheep?  
 Matt. 14. 23. In what conversation could he divert himself, but among those, whose doltish in-  
 18. 12. capacity and froward humour, did wring from his patience those words, *How*  
 17. 17. *long shall I be with you, how long shall I suffer you?* What Musick did he hear? What but the ratlings of clamorous obloquy, and furious accusations against him? to be desperately maligned, to be insolently mocked, to be stiled a King, and treated as a slave; to be spit on, to be buffeted, to be scourged, to be drenched with gall, to be crowned with thorns, to be nailed to a cross; these were the delights which our Lord enjoyed, these the sweet comforts of his life, and the notable prosperities of his fortune: such a portion was allotted to him, the which he did accept from God's hand with all patient submission, with perfect contentedness, with exceeding alacrity, never repining at it, never complaining of it, never flinching from it, or fainting under it; but proceeding on in the performance of all his duty, and prosecution of his great designs, with undaunted Courage, with unwearied industry, with undisturbed tranquillity and satisfaction of mind.

Had indeed his condition and fortune been otherwise framed; had he come into the world qualified with a noble extraction; had he lived in a splendid equipage, had he enjoyed a plentiful estate and a fair reputation, had he been favoured and caressed by men; had he found a current of prosperous success, had safety, ease and pleasure waited on him; Where had been the pious resignation of his will; where the precious merit of his obedience; where the glorious lustre of his example? how then had our frailty in him become victorious over all its enemies; how had he triumphed over the solicitations and allurements of the flesh; over the frowns and flatteries of the world; over the malice and fury of hell; how then could he have so demonstrated his immense charity toward us, or laid so mighty obligations upon us?

Δι' ἀγνώσεως  
 σε παθήμε-  
 των ἐλπίσων  
 ἡμᾶς κύει.  
 Lit. Gr.  
 Lam. 2. 12.

Such in general was the case, and such the deportment of our Lord; but there was somewhat peculiar, and beyond all this occurring to him, which drew forth the words of our Text: God hath tempered for him a potion of all the most bitter and loathsome ingredients that could be; a drop whereof no man ever hath, or could indure to sip; for he was not only to undergo whatever load humane rage could impose, of ignominious disgrace, and grievous pain; but to feel dismal agonies of Spirit, and those *unknown Sufferings*, which God alone could inflict, God only could sustain: *Behold, and see*, he might well say, *if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me; wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger?* He was to labour with pangs of Charity, and through his heart to be pierced with deepest commiseration of our wretched case: he was to crouch under the burthen of all the sins (the numberless most heinous sins and abominations) ever committed by mankind: he was to pass through the hottest furnace of Divine Vengeance, and by his blood to quench the wrath of Heaven flaming out against iniquity; he was to stand (as it were) before the mouth of Hell, belching fire and brimstone on his face: his grief was to supply the defects of our remorse, and his suffering in those few moments to countervail the eternal torments due to us: He was to bear the hiding of God's face, and an eclipse of that favourable aspect, in which all bliss doth reside; a case which he that so perfectly understood, could not but infinitely resent: these things with the clearest apprehension he saw coming on him; and no wonder that our nature started at so ghastly a sight; or that humane instinct should dictate that petition, *Father if thou wilt, let this cup pass from me*; words implying his most real participation of our infirmity; words denoting the height of those sad evils which encompassed him with his lively and lowly resentment of them; words informing us, how we should entertain God's chastisements, and whence we must seek relief of our pressures (that we should receive them, not with a scornful neglect or sullen insensibility, but with a meek contrition of soul; that we should entirely depend on God's pleasure for sup-



support under them, or a releasement from them) words which in conjunction with those following do shew how instantly we should quash and over-rule any insurrection of natural desire against the command or providence of God. We must not take that prayer to signify any purpose in our Lord to shift off his passion, or any wavering in resolution about it; for he could not any wise mean to undo that, which he knew done with God before the world's foundation; he would not unsettle that, which was by his own free undertaking, and irreversibile decree; He that so often with satisfaction did foretel this event, who with so earnest desire longed for its approach; who with that sharpness of indignation did rebuke his friend offering to divert him from it, who did again repress St. Peter's animosity with that serious expostulation, *The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?* who had advisedly laid such trains for its accomplishment, would he decline it? Could that heart all burning with zeal for God and charity to men admit the least thought or motion of averfeness from drinking that cup, which was the Sovereign medicine administred by divine wisdom for the recovery of God's Creation? No; had he spake with such intent, legions of Angels had flown to his rescue; that word, which framed the worlds, which stilled the tempests, which ejected Devils, would immediately have scattered his enemies, and dashed all their projects against him; wherefore those words did not proceed from intention, but as from instinct, and for instruction; importing, that what our humane frailty was apt to suggest, that his divine virtue was more ready to smother; neither did he vent the former, but that he might express the latter.

He did express it in real effect; immediately with all readiness addressing himself to receive that unsavoury potion; he reached out his hand for it, yielding fair opportunity and advantages to his persecutors; he lifted it up to his mouth, innocently provoking their envy and malice; he drank it off with a most steady calmness, and sweet composure of mind, with the silence, the simplicity, the meekness of a lamb, carried to the slaughter; no fretful thought rising up, no angry word breaking forth, but clear patience, enlivened with a warm charity, shining in all his behaviour, and thorough every circumstance of his passion.

Such in his life, such at his death was the practice of our Lord; in conformity whereto we also readily should undertake whatever God proposeth, we gladly should accept whatever God offereth, we vigorously should perform whatever God enjoyneth, we patiently should undergo whatever God imposeth or inflicteth, how cross soever any duty, any dispensation may prove to our carnal sense or humour.

To do thus, the contemplation of this example may strongly engage us, for if our Lord had not his will, can we in reason expect; can we in modestly desire to have ours? must we be cockered and pleased in every thing, when as he was treated so coarsely, and crossed in all things? can we grutch at any kind of service, or sufferance; can we think much (for our trial, our exercise, our correction) to bear a little want, a little disgrace, a little pain, when the Son of God was put to discharge the hardest tasks, to endure the forest adversities?

But farther to enforce these duties, be pleased to cast a glance on two considerations. 1. What the Will is to which, 2. Who the Willer is to whom, we must submit.

1. What is the Will of God? Is it any thing unjust, unworthy, or dishonourable any thing incommodious or hurtful, any thing extremely difficult, or intolerably grievous that God requireth of us; to do or bear? No: he willeth nothing from us, or to us, which doth not best become us, and most behove us; which is not attended with safety, with ease, with the solideest profit, the fairest reputation, and the sweetest pleasure.

Two things he willeth; that we should be good, and that we should be happy, the first in order to the second, for that virtue is the certain way, and a necessary qualification to felicity.

*The will of God, saith St. Paul, is our sanctification;* what is that? what, but that the decays of our frame, and the defacements of God's Image within us should be repaired; that the faculties of our soul should be restored to their original integrity and vigour; that from most wretched slaveries we should be translated into a happy freedom, yea, into a glorious kingdom; that from despi-



cable beggary and baseness we should be advanced to substantial wealth, and sublime dignity; that we should be cleansed from the foulest defilements, and decked with the goodliest ornaments; that we should be cured of most loathsome diseases, and settled in a firm health of soul; that we should be delivered from those brutish lusts, and those devilish passions, which create in us a hell of darkness, of confusion, of vexation; which dishonour our nature, deform our soul, ruffle our mind, and wrack our conscience; that we should be endowed with those worthy dispositions and affections, which do constitute in our hearts a heaven of light, of order, of joy and peace; dignify our nature, beautify our soul, clarify and cheer our mind, that we should eschew those practices, which never go without a retinue of woful mischiefs and sorrows, embracing those which always yield abundant fruits of convenience and comfort; that, in short, we should become friends of God, fit to converse with Angels, and capable of Paradise.

1 Tim. 2. 7.  
2 Pet. 3. 9.  
Ezek. 33. 11.

God (saith St. Paul again) *willeth all men to be saved; he willeth not* (saith St. Peter) *that any man should perish*; He saith it himself, yea, he sweareth it, *that he hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his way and live*: And what is this will, what, but that we should obtain all the good whereof we are capable; that we should be filled with joy, and crowned with glory; that we should be fixed in an immovable state of happiness, in the perpetual enjoyment of God's favour, and in the light of his blissful presence: that we should be rid of all the evils, to which we are liable; that we should be released from inextricable chains of guilt, from incurable stings of remorse, from being irrecoverably engaged to pass a disconsolate eternity in utter darkness, and extream Woe? Such is God's Will; to such purposes every command, every dispensation of God (how grim, how rough soever it may seem) doth tend: and do we refuse to comply with that good Will; do we set against it a Will of our own, affecting things unworthy of us, things unprofitable to us, things prejudicial to our best interests; things utterly baneful to our souls? Do we reject the Will that would save us, and adhere to a Will that would ruine us; a foolish and a senseless Will, which slighting the immense treasures of Heaven, the unfading glories of God's Kingdom, the ineffable joys of eternity doth catch at specious nothings, doth pursue mischievous trifles; a shadow of base profit, a smock of vain honour, a flash of sordid pleasure; which passeth away like *the mirth of fools, or the crackling of thorns*, leaving only soot, black and bitter behind it.

Ecclef. 7. 6.

But at least e'er we do thus, let us consider, whose Will it is, that requireth our compliance.

Phil. 1. 48. 5.  
Apoc. 4. 11.

It is the Will of Him, whose Will did found the earth, and rear the Heaven; whose Will sustaineth all things in their existence and operation; whose Will is the great law of the World, which universal nature in all its motions doth observe; which reigneth in Heaven, the blessed Spirits adoring it, which swayeth in Hell it self, the cursed Fiends trembling at it; And shall we alone (we pitiful Worms crawling on earth) presume to murmur, or dare to kick against it?

It is the Will of our Maker, who together with all our other faculties did create and confer on us, the very power of Willing; and shall we turn the Work of his hands, the gift of his bounty against him?

It is the Will of our Preserver who together with all that we are, or have, continually doth uphold our very Will it self; so that without employing any positive force, meerly by letting us fall out of his hand, he can fend us and it back to nothing; and shall our Will clash with that, on which it so wholly dependeth; without which it cannot subsist one moment, or move one step forward in action?

1 Sam. 3. 8.

It is the Will of our Sovereign Lord, who upon various indisputable accounts hath a just right to govern us, and an absolute power to dispose of us: ought we not therefore to say with old Eli, *It is the Lord, let him do to me as it seems good to him*? Is it not extream iniquity, is it not monstrous arrogance for us, in derogation to his Will, to pretend giving law, or picking a station to our selves? Do we not manifestly incur high treason against the King of Heaven by so invading his office, usurping his authority, snatching his Sceptre into our hands, and setting our Wills in his Throne?

It



It is the Will of our Judge, from whose mouth our doom must proceed, awarding Life or Death, Weal or Woe unto us; and what sentence can we expect, what favour can we pretend to, if we presumptuously shall offend, oppose that Will, which is the supream Rule of Justice, and sole Fountain of Mercy?

It is the Will of our Redeemer, who hath bought us with an inestimable price, and with infinite pains hath rescued us from miserable Captivity under most barbarous enemies, that obeying his Will we might command our own, and serving him we might enjoy perfect freedom; And shall we, declining his call and conduct out of that unhappy state bereave him of his purchase, frustrate his undertakings, and forfeit to our selves the benefit of so great Redemption?

It is the Will of our best friend; who loveth us much better, than we do love our selves; who is concerned for our welfare, as his own dearest interest, and greatly delighteth therein; who by innumerable experiments hath demonstrated an excess of kindness to us; who in all his dealings with us purely doth aim at our good, never charging any duty on us, or dispensing any event to us, so much with intent to exercise his power over us, as to express his goodness towards us; who never *doth afflict or grieve us* more against our Will, than against his own desire; never indeed but when goodness itself calleth for it, and even mercy doth urge thereto; to whom we are much obliged, that he vouchsafeth to govern and guide us, our service being altogether unprofitable to him, his governance exceedingly beneficial to us: And doth not such a Will deserve regard, may it not demand compliance from us? to neglect or infringe it, what is it? is it not palpable folly, is it not foul disingenuity, is it not detestable ingratitude? Lam. 3. 39.

So doth every relation of God recommend his Will to us; and each of his Attributes doth no less: for,

It is the Will of him, who is most holy, or whose Will is essential rectitude; how then can we thwart it, without being stained with the guilt, and wounded with a sense of great irregularity and iniquity?

It is the Will of him who is perfectly just; who therefore cannot but assert his own righteous Will, and avenge the violation thereof: is it then adviseable to drive him to that point by wilful provocation; or to run upon the edge of necessary severity?

It is the Will of him who is infinitely wise; who therefore doth infallibly know what is best for us, what doth most besit our capacities and circumstances; what in the final result will conduce to our greatest advantage and comfort; shall we then prefer the dreams of our vain mind before the oracles of his Wisdom; shall we, forsaking the direction of his unerring Will, follow the impulse of our giddy humour?

It is the Will of him, who is immensely good and benign; whose Will therefore can be no other than good Will to us; who can mean nothing thereby but to derive bounty and mercy on us: Can we then fail of doing well, if we put our selves entirely into his hands; are we not our greatest enemies, in withstanding his gracious intentions?

It is finally the Will of him, who is uncontrollably powerful; whose Will therefore must prevail one way or other: either with our Will, or against it, either so as to bow and satisfy us, or so as to break and plague us: for *My counsel* (saith he) *shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.* As to his dispensations, we may fret, we may wail, we may bark at them, but we cannot alter or avoid them: sooner may we by our moans check the tides, or by our cries stop the Sun in his carriere, than divert the current of affairs, or change the state of things established by God's high decree; what he layeth on, no hand can remove; what he hath destined, no power can reverse; our anger therefore will be ineffectual, or impatience will have no other fruit, than to aggravate our guilt, and augment our grief. Isa. 46. 11.

As to his commands, we may *lift up our selves against him*, we may fight stoutly, we may in a sort prove Conquerors; but it will be a miserable victory, the Trophies whereof shall be erected in Hell, and stand upon the ruins of our happiness; for while we insult over abused grace, we must fall under in-



ceded justice: If God cannot fairly procure his Will of us in way of due obedience, he will surely execute his Will upon us in way of righteous vengeance; if we do not surrender our Wills to the overtures of his goodness, we must submit our backs to the strokes of his anger: He must reign over us, if not as over loyal Subjects to our comfort, yet as over stubborn Rebels to our confusion; for this in that case will be our doom, and the last words God will deign to spend upon us, *Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me.*

Luc. 19. 27.

Heb. 13. 20.

*Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever: Amen.*

## S E R M O N V.

### Of CONTENTMENT.

P H I L. iv. 11.

*I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.*

Ἐγὼ ὅς ἐμα-  
δον ἐν οἷς εἰ-  
μι αὐτάρκης  
εἶναι.

**I**N these words by the example of an eminent Saint is recommended to us the practice of an excellent duty, or virtue: a practice in itself most worthy, very grateful to God, and immediately of great benefit to our selves; being indeed necessary towards the comfortable enjoyment of our lives: It is Contentedness, the virtue, which of all other doth most render this World acceptable, and constituteth a kind of temporal Heaven; which he that hath, is thereby *ipso facto* in good measure happy, whatever other things he may seem to want; which he that wanteth, doth, however otherwise he be furnished, become miserable, and carrieth a kind of Hell within him: it cannot therefore but well deserve our best study about it, and care to get; in imitation of St. Paul, who *had learned in whatever state he was therein to be content.*

Τὸ δ' αὐτάρ-  
κης τί σημαί-  
νῃ, ὁ μόνον  
αἰρετὸν ποιεῖ  
τὸ βίον, καὶ  
μνηστικὸς ἐν  
τῷ ἁγίῳ. Αἰσθ.  
Εἰς. 1. 7.

In discoursing upon which words I shall consider two particulars; first, the virtue it self (Contentedness in every state) the nature of which I shall endeavour to explain; then the way of attaining or producing it, implied by St. Paul in the words, *I have learned.*

Τὸ δὲ δαιμό-  
νιον ἀπέχον  
δεῖ πάντα αὐ-  
τῷ πεπλη-  
ρωμένῳ τινὶ  
εὐκλείῃ, ὅς  
Νίκος δὲ  
περὶ αὐτὸν  
ἔδδ' ἡμῶν.  
Αἰσθ. 3. 24.

I. For explication of the virtue: The word here expressing it is, *αὐτάρχεια*, which signifieth self-sufficiency, or having enough of ones self; the which is not to be understood absolutely, as if he took himself to be independent in nature, able to subsist of himself, not wanting any support or comfort without himself (for this is the property and privilege of the great *El-shaddai*, who alone subsisteth of himself, needing toward his being and felicity nothing without himself: this is repugnant to the nature of man, who is a creature essentially dependent for his being and subsistence, indigent of many things for his satisfaction and welfare) but relatively considering his present state, the circumstances wherein he was, and the capacities he had; which by God's disposal and providence were such, that he could not want more, than he had in his possession,



possession, or reach. He meant not to exclude God, and his Providence, but rather supposed that as the ground and cause of his self-sufficiency: according as elsewhere he expresseth it: *Not as if we were sufficient of our selves, 1 Cor. 3. 5. but our sufficiency is of God.* Nor did he intend to exclude the need of other creatures otherwise than as considered without his possession, or beyond his power; But he meaneth only, that he did not desire or lack more than what God had supplied him with; had put into his hand, or had set within his reach; that his will did suit to his state, his desire did not exceed his power.

This is the meaning of the word, which the Apostle useth; but for the more full and clear understanding the virtue it self, we shall first consider the object, about which it is conversant, then the several Acts, which it requireth, or wherein the exercise thereof consisteth.

1. The object of contentedness is the present state of things whatever it be (whether prosperous or adverse, of eminency or meanness, of abundance or scantness) wherein by divine Providence we are set: *to be content with the things in which we are*, that is our present Condition, with all its circumstances: so it may be generally supposed, considering that it is ordinary, and almost natural for men (who have not learned as St. Paul had done, or are not instructed, and exercised in the Practice of this Duty) to be dissatisfied, and disquieted in every state; to be always in want of something; to find defects in every fortune; to fancy they may be in better case, and to desire it earnestly: If we estimate things wisely, rich men are more liable to discontent than poor men. It is observable that prosperity is a peevish thing, and men of highest fortune are apt most easily to resent the smallest things: a little neglect, a slight word, an displeasing look doth affect them more than reproaches, blows, wrongs, do those of a mean condition.

Prosperity is a nice and squeamish thing, and it is hard to find any thing able to please men of a full and prosperous state, which being incapable of bettering in substantial things, they can hardly find Matter of solid delight. Whereas a poor estate is easily comforted by the accession of many things which it wanteth: a good meal, a small gift, a little gain, or good success of his labour doth greatly please a poor man with a very solid pleasure: but a rich man hath nothing to please him, but a new toy, a puff of applause, success at a horse-race, at bowls, at hunting; in some petty sport and pastime, which can yield but a very thin and transitory satisfaction to any man not quite brutified and void of sense: whence contentedness hath place, and is needful in every condition, be it in appearance never so prosperous, so plentiful, so pleasant. *In the fulness of his Sufficiencies, he shall be in straits.*

The formal object thereof may indeed seem to be a condition distastful to our sense, or cross to our fancy; an adverse or strait condition; a condition of poverty, of disgrace, of any great inconvenience or distress incident to us in this World; but since the most men are absolutely in such a condition, exposed to so many wants and troubles; since many more are needy comparatively, wanting the conveniencies that others enjoy, and which themselves affect; since there are few, who in right estimation are not indigent and poor, that is, who do not desire and fancy themselves to want many things which they have not (for wealth consisteth not so much in the possession of goods, as in apprehension of freedom from want, and in satisfaction of desires) since care, trouble, disappointment, satiety and discontent following them, do not only haunt cottages, and stick to the lowest sort of People, but do even frequent palaces, and pursue men of highest rank; therefore any state may be the object of contentedness; and the duty is of a very general concernment; Princes themselves need to learn it; the lessons teaching it, and the arguments perswading it may as well suit the rich and noble, as the poor and the peasant; so our Apostle himself doth intimate in the words immediately following our Text: *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound, Every where, and in all things I am instructed both to be full, and to be hungry: both to abound and to suffer need;* he had the art not only to manage well both conditions, but to be satisfied in either.

But seeing real adversity, poverty and disgrace have naturally the strongest influence in disturbing and disordering our minds; that contentedness is plainly



ly most needful in such cases, as the proper support, or medicine of our mind in them; that other states do need it only as they, by fancy or infirmity, do symbolize or conspire with these; therefore unto persons in these states we shall more explicitly apply our directions, and persuasions, as to the proper and primary subjects of contentedness; the which by analogy, or parity of reason may be extended to all others who by imaginary wants and distresses do create displeasure to themselves. So much for the object, or the subject, of the virtue.

2. The acts, wherein the practice thereof consisteth (which are necessary ingredients, or constant symptoms of it) belong either to the mind and understanding, or to the will and appetite, or to external demeanour and practice; being 1. right opinions and judgments of mind, 2. fit dispositions and affections of heart, 3. outward good actions and behaviours, in regard to our condition and the events befalling us; the former being as the root and stock, the latter as the fruits and the flowers of the duty: unto which may be reduced the correspondent negations, or absence of bad judgments, affections and deportments in respect to the same objects.

(1.) As to our opinions and judgments of things contentedness requireth, that

1. We should believe our condition whatever it be to be determined by God, and that all events befalling us, do proceed from him; at least that he permit and ordereth them, according to his judgment and pleasure: that *Εἰς τὰ θεῶν πᾶς καὶ καλὰ καὶ κακὰ γίνονται*, all (as the Prophet singeth) both good and evil proceedeth out of the mouth of the most High; that affliction (as Job said) cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; as a thing arising spontaneously, or sowed by the hand of some creature, but rather descendeth from him, who saith, *I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things.*

We are apt, when any thing falleth out unpleasant to us, to exclaim against fortune, and to accuse our stars; or to inveigh against the second causes which immediately offend us, ascribing all to their influence; which proceeding in us doth argue in us a *Heathenish* ignorance and infidelity, or at least much inconsiderateness, and impotency of mind; that our judgment is blinded and clouded, or perverted and seduced by ill passions; for that in truth there is not in the world any occurrence merely fortuitous, or fatal (all being guided and wielded by the powerful hand of the All-wise, and Almighty God) there is no creature which in its agency doth not depend upon God, as the instrument of his will, or subordinate thereto; wherefore upon every event we should, raising our minds above all other causes, discern and acknowledge God's hand; as David did, when Shimei cursed him; *Let him (said the good King) curse because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David;* as Job did when he was rifled of his goods, *The Lord (said he) gave, and the Lord hath taken away;* as our Saviour did, when in regard to the fore hardships he was designed to undergo, he said, *The Cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink?*

2. Hence we should always judge every thing which happeneth to be thoroughly good and fit, worthy (all things considered to be appointed, or permitted by that Governour of things; not entertaining any harsh thoughts of God, as if he were not enough wise, just, or benign in ordering us to be afflicted or crossed; but taking all occurrences to be well consistent with all God's holy Perfections and Attributes.

We are apt to conceit, that the World is ill ordered, when we do not thrive and prosper therein; that every thing is irregular, which squareth not to the models of our fancies; that things had gone much better, if our designs had found success; but these are vain and perverse conceits; for that certainly is most good, which seemeth good to God; his will is a perfect standard of right and convenience, his eye never aimeth wrong, his hand never faileth to hit the mark of what is best; *All his paths are mercy and truth; He is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works:* So did King Hezekiah rightly judge,

Soph. Aj. Lev.  
Lam. 3. 38.  
Amos 3. 6.  
1 Kings 12.  
15. 24.

El. 45. 7.

*Atque Deos  
atque astra  
vocat credulitas  
vana.*

2 Sam. 16. 10.

Job 1. 21.

Joh. 18. 11.

*Παρεχρησάμενοι τοίνυν παρεκλάβομεν τὸν σοφὸν καὶ παῖδα κυβερνήτην καὶ εὐεχόμενοι τὰ οἰκονομήματα ὅποια τοῖς ἡμῶν θυμῶν, καὶ ἡμεῖς, Θεοδ. Ep. 136.*

*Placuit homini quicquid Deus placuit, Sen. Ep. 75.*

*Σπερμα ὃ καὶ τὰ ὅλα καὶ ἅπαντα σοφίας ἀντιπροσώπων, καὶ ταῦτα ἀντιπροσώπων συμφορῶν. Θεοδ. Ep. 137.*  
*Οὐδὲ γὰρ ὅτι σοφὸς τὸ συμφορῶν, καὶ ὅτι ἀγαθὸς τὸ ἡμῶν καὶ ἡμεῖς, Θεοδ. Ep. 138.*

Psal. 25. 10.  
145. 17.



judge, when upon denunciation of a sad doom to his country and posterity, he replied to the Prophet, *Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken*; 2 Kings 20. 19. so even the Pagan Sage discerned, when he thus rebuked a male-content; *You slave, do you forsooth desire any thing, but what is best? and is not that only best, which seemeth best to God?* Ἄνδρες τοὶ δούλοι ἀλλοτρίοι θέλει, ἢ τὸ ἀμεινον; ἀλλὰ οὐ τὸ ἀμεινον, ἢ τὸ θεῷ δοκούν; Att. 11. 7.

3. We should even be satisfied in our mind that according to God's purpose all events do tend and conduce to our particular welfare; being not only good to us as members of the world, and in order to more general ends, but serving towards our private benefit and advantage. We may be ready perhaps to confess, that whatever happeneth may be indeed just and fit in some distant, and occult respects, but hardly can we be induced to allow, that what we feel offensive to our sense or fancy, is really good for us, or was meant for our benefit; we cannot easily discern any thing of love or favour in such matters: Those sort of *Aphorisms*, in Holy Scripture, *Happy is the man whom God correcteth*; *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten*; sound strangely, and are huge *Paradoxes* to us; such is our blindness of mind, and dullness of apprehension: but God knoweth with so exact a skilfulness to manage things, that every particular occurrence shall be advantageous to the person, whom it toucheth; and accordingly to each one he dispenseth that which is most suitable to him; whence, as frequently it is necessary for our good that we should be crossed (for that indeed otherwise we should often much harm, sometimes we should quite undo our selves) so it always, when God so ordereth it, is to be deemed most profitable and wholesome for us: we are therefore in reason obliged to take the saddest accidents, and sharpest afflictions, coming upon us by providence, to be no other than fatherly corrections, or friendly rebukes, designed to render us good and happy; as arguments therefore and instances of especial good-will toward us; conceiving under every dispensation that we do as it were hear God speaking to us, as he did to those in the Prophet: *I know the thoughts, that I think toward you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.* Job 5. 17. Jam. 1. 12. Rev. 3. 19. Prov. 3. 12. Jer. 29. 11.

4. Hence we are to believe, that our present Condition (whatever it be to carnal, or worldly sense) is in right judgment, all things considered, the best, most proper, most desirable for us; better than we, if it were at our discretion and choice should put our selves into: for that God (*the Saviour of all men*, who desireth that no man should perish; who is good to all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works; who exceedingly tendereth the welfare of his children and subjects) doth ever (here in this life, the time of merit and trial) with a most wise good-will design our best good; and by the most proper methods (such as do best suit our circumstances and capacities) doth aim to draw us unto happiness; and accordingly doth assign a station for us most befitting in order to that great end; we therefore should think our selves well placed, because we are where God doth set us, that we have enough, because we have what God alloteth us. 1 Tim. 2. 4. Ezek. 33. 11. 2 Pet. 3. 9. Psal. 145. 9.

There are other more particular judgments, which contentedness involveth, or which are required toward it; such as these; that nothing originally is due to us, but all cometh purely from divine favour and bounty; that all adversities are justly, and deservedly inflicted on us, as the due wages, or natural fruits of our sins; that our happiness dependeth not on any present enjoyments or possessions, but may well subsist without them; that a competency (or so much as sufficeth to maintain our life without intolerable pain) ought to satisfy our desires; but these, and the like judgments will come opportunely to be considered as motives to the practice of the duty.

(2.) From such acts of our mind or intellective parts concerning things incident to us, should proceed the following dispositions of will and affection.

1. We should entertain all occurrences, how grievous soever to us, with intire submission, and resignation of our will to the will of God; wholly acquiescing in his good pleasure; saying in our hearts after our Lord, *Let not my will, but thine be done*; with good Eli, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*; with David, *Behold here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good*. Luk. 22. 42. 1 Sam. 3. 18. 2 Sam. 15. 26.



Εἰ ταύτη θεοὶ φίλον, ταύτη γενέσθαι  
ἂν μάλλον θέλω τὸ γινώσκον, καὶ τὸ  
τοῦ θεοῦ ἡγούμενον ὅτι θεὸς θέλει, ἢ ἡ γὰρ  
προσκόμισμα, διακονῶν ἢ ἀκόλουθος  
ἐκείνου, συνομιλῶν, ἐρίζομαι, ἀπλῶς  
συνδέσσω. Αἰτ. 3. 7.

good to him; even with Socrates, if so it pleaseth God so  
let it be; with Epictetus, I always chiefly will that, which  
cometh to pass; for I account that better which God willeth  
than what I will myself; I will adhere as a minister and fol-  
lower to him, I pursue, I affect, I simply will with him:

looking upon them as sent from God we should heartily bid  
them welcome, we should kindly embrace them, we should use them with all  
fair respect: ἀπαράδεκτα τὰ συμβαίνοντα (to hug, or kindly to embrace things in-  
cident) φιλεῖν τὰ ἀπονεμόμενα (to love things dispensed by providence) are precepts,  
which even as dictated by natural reason Philosophers do much inculcate.

This excludeth all rebellious Insurrection, and swellings of mind against  
providence, such as argue that we dislike God's government; that were we  
able we should struggle with God's will; that we gladly would shake off his  
yoke; all such ill resentment and repining at our lot, which maketh God's  
hand grievous, and his yoke uneasie to us: such affections as the wise man  
toucheth, when he saith, *The foolishness of Man perverteth his way, and his  
heart fretteth against the Lord.*

2. We should bear all things with steady calmness and composedness of  
mind, suppressing, or quelling those tumults, those storms, those excesses of  
passion, which the sense of things disgustful is apt to excite; such as are im-  
moderate grief, fierce anger, irksome despair, and the like. No adversity  
should so ruffle our minds, as to defeat and pervert the use of our reason, so  
as to hinder us from perceiving, or performing what becometh us, so as to  
ingage us into any irregular, or unseemly behaviour.

3. We should indeed bear the worst events with an εὐθυμία, that is, with  
a sweet and cheerful disposition of mind, so as not to be  
put out of humour; not to be dejected, or quite discour-  
aged by them, not to fall into that *braviness*, which (as  
the wise Man saith) *maketh the heart of man to stoop*; but  
rather finding delight and complacence in them, as consi-  
dering whence they come, whither they aim and tend:  
such was the disposition and demeanour of the Apostles and  
primitive good Christians in the midst of their most grie-  
vous adversities and sufferings; they rejoiced, &c. they did take joyfully the  
spoiling of their goods, they did account it all joy, when they fell into divers  
tribulations: they were ὡς λυπημένοι, ἀλλ' ὃ χαίροντες, as grieved but always re-  
joicing; their state was grievous, but their heart was constantly cheerful. Such  
a constant frame of mind we should maintain, so continually prepared we should  
be against all contingencies, that nothing should happen amiss to us, so as deep-  
ly to affect us, or to unsettle us in our humour; that every thing from God's  
hand should be acceptable; that no sadness may seize on us, at least that we do  
not indulge or cherish it; that in no wise we suffer any regret to quench that spi-  
ritual comfort and joy in God, which becometh the upright (as the Psalmist saith)  
and which we are so often enjoined perpetually to maintain, as in all cases so par-  
ticularly under afflictions and trials. We cannot indeed hardly be content, if  
we are not cheerful; for it is hard to be altogether on the suffering and bear-  
ing hand, without any pleasure; the mind can hardly stand in a poise; so as  
neither to sorrow or joy: we cannot digest adversity, if we do not relish it;  
we shall not submit to it as his will, if we do not take it for an argument of  
his love: ἡδοκῶ, I (saith St. Paul) have a liking or pleasure in infirmities, in  
reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when  
I am weak then I am strong.

4. We should with faith and hope rely and wait on God for the removal, or  
easement of our afflictions; or however we should confide in him for grace,  
and strength to support them well: as our Saviour did, when he prayed, *Fa-  
ther, if thou be willing remove this Cup*; as they did in the Prophet, who  
said, *In the way of thy judgments, O Lord, we have waited on thee*; accord-  
ing to that rule in the Lamentation; *It is good that a man should both hope, and  
wait quietly for the Salvation of the Lord*; and those precepts in the Psalms;  
*Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him; wait upon the Lord, by of good cou-  
rage, and he shall strengthen thine heart.*

We



We should in any case be ready with the holy *Psalmist* thus to interrogate, *Psal. 42. 1. 1.*  
and sustain our selves, *Why art thou cast down, O my Soul, why art thou so dis-*  
*quieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, for the help of*  
*his countenance.*

Remembring, and considering, that (as we are expressly taught in *Scripture*, and as all our Religion doth clearly suppose) *God knoweth to rescue the* *2 Pet. 2. 3.*  
*Godly out of tribulation,* (he knoweth the proper season, when it is fit to do it) *1 Pet. 5. 7.*  
that he is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able: *Matt. 6. 25.*  
but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to *1 Cor. 10. 13.*  
bear it; reflecting, I say, on these certain points of Christian Truth, we  
should never sorrow as those who are without hope; we should never despair of  
a good riddance from our adversity, when it shall be seasonable or beneficial  
for us; we should always be assured of a comfortable support under it, which  
is usually better than deliverance from it; our minds should never sink into  
despondency, or disconsolateness: that this is practicable in the worst case, we  
have conspicuous instances to assure us; it hath been the practice of most il-  
lustrious and excellent persons, particularly of the holy *Apostles*; never was *2 Cor. 4. 8.*  
any condition, in outward respects and appearance, more forlorn and dismal *1 Cor. 4. 11.*  
than was theirs; yet it no-wise bereaved them of hope, or courage; *We*  
*(they could say) are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed,*  
*but not in despair, persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but not destroyed.*

5. We should indeed not so much as faint, or languish in our minds upon  
any such occasion; no adversity should impair the forces of our reason or our  
spirit; should enervate our courage, or slacken our industry; should render  
us sick, or weak in heart; for, *If (saith the wise Man) thou faint in the day* *Prov. 24. 10.*  
*of adversity, thy strength is small* (is the sign of an infirm mind) and *μη εναντιον*, *2 Cor. 4. 16.*  
*not to fainter or decay, μη δεκλειων, not to be dissolved or disjointed in our souls* *Rev. 2. 3.*  
(as the body is in scorbutick distempers) are rules prescribed to us in such *2 Thess. 3. 13.*  
cases: We do then indeed need a firm and robust constitution of soul; we *Gal. 6. 9.*  
should then bear up most resolutely and stoutly: the encouragement of *Moses* *Heb. 12. 3.*  
to the people, entering into battel may well be accommodated to us, in regard  
to our conflicts with adversities; *Let not your hearts faint, fear not and do not*  
*tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them.* *Deut. 20. 3.*

6. We should not be weary of our condition, or have irksome longings for  
alteration; but with a quiet indifferency, and willingness of mind lie under it,  
during God's pleasure; according to the *Wise-man's* advice; *My son despise not* *Prov. 3. 11.*  
*the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction;* and that of the  
*Apostle*, enforced by our Lord's example; *Consider him, that endured such con-* *Heb. 12. 3.*  
*tradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*  
We should not think God slow, or his time long and tedious, as if he were  
forgetful of us, or backward to succour us: as the *Psalmist* was enclined to do,  
when in the day of trouble he brake forth into these conceits and expressions; *Will* *Psal. 77. 7. 10.*  
*the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more; is his mercy clean gone*  
*for ever, doth his promise fail for evermore; Hath God forgotten to be gracious;*  
*hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?* Thus he in a sad mood was apt to  
think and speak; but recollecting himself he perceived it was his errour, and  
confessed it was his fault thus to imagine, *I said, it was mine infirmity;* and it  
will be ours likewise, if we entertain such conceptions and resentments: we  
should with the same mind endure our present state, as we do pass through a  
hard winter, or a time of foul weather, taking it for seasonable and fit, be-  
cause the wise Author of nature hath so appointed and ordered it.

7. We should by adverse accidents be render'd lowly in our own eyes, and  
sober in our conceits of our selves; meek and gentle, tender and pliable in  
our temper and frame of spirit; sensible of our unworthiness and meanness,  
of our natural frailty, penury and misery, of our actual offences and miscar-  
riages; deeply affected in regard to the awful majesty and power, to the per-  
fect holiness and strict justice of God: they should quell our haughty stomach,  
they should supple our stiff wilfulness, they should soften our hard hearts, they  
should mitigate our peevish humours; to effect these things is usually the design  
of such accidents, and it is ever the best fruit of them; this is that, which  
St. *Peter* adviseth to, when he saith, *Be humbled under the mighty hand of God;* *1 Pet. 5. 6.*



which God approveth and encourageth with a gracious promise, when he saith;— *To this man will I look, even to him that is of a poor and contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word*: this disposition is an inseparable adherent to contentedness; he that hath not his spirit thus broken or mollified, will hardly be content in any state; he that is haughty in conceit, and sturdy in humour will every where find that which will cross and disturb him.

8. It is required that we should, notwithstanding any meanness, any hardness of our condition, be meekly and kindly affected toward others, being satisfied and pleased with their more prosperous state. We should not be angry with the World, because we do not thrive or flourish in it; we should not be fullen or peevish toward any man, because his fortune is better than ours; we should not repine or grudge at the good success of any of our brethren, because we want the like our selves, *we should rather rejoyce with those that rejoyce*; innocently filching some pleasure from them, or borrowing some satisfaction from their enjoyments. It is humane thus to do, because of the natural cognation and friendship of men; it is more especially *Christian*, because of our spiritual consanguinity; by vertue whereof we are so knit together, and made *members each to other*, that if (as St. Paul telleth us) *one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, and if one member be honoured, all the members should rejoyce with it*: We can hardly be content without thus appropriating the goods, and sharing in the delights of others; he can never be content, who looketh *with an evil eye* upon other mens prosperity; he cannot do well himself, who loveth not to see his neighbour do well; numberless occasions will happen to discompose and vex him.

Adversity impatiently born is apt to sour our spirits, and render us froward toward men; especially when it proceedeth from the unkindness, ingratitude, or treachery of friends, or of persons obliged to us for our good Will, or for benefits done to them; but nothing should render us unkindly disposed toward the World, nothing should extinguish charity in us toward any man; so plain reason teacheth us, so great examples enforce. *Moses* did not lose his affection towards his Countrymen, because he was by one of them threatened away into banishment and vagrancy; the *Apostles* became not disaffected to the World, because it misused and persecuted them; our Lord did continue most earnestly to desire, and laboriously to endeavour the good of those who most despitefully used him; Like theirs, in all cases, should our disposition be; we should ever observe the *Psalmist's* advice; *Cease from anger, forsake wrath, fret not thy self in any wise to do evil*. Again,

9. Contentedness doth imply a freedom from all solicitude and anxiety of mind, in reference to provision for our needs, and conveniences of life; according to those rules and precepts of *casting our burthen and care upon the Lord*, of *being careful for nothing, but commending our affairs to God's ordering*; according to that most comfortable precept of our Lord, *Take no care, saying what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or how shall we be clothed; for your heavenly Father knoweth, that ye want all these things*: If we do not thus, it is hardly possible that we should be content; if we do not depend upon Providence, we cannot scape being often distracted with care, and perplexed with fear; we cannot cheerfully hope for any thing we need, nor be quietly secure of any thing we possess.

10. It requireth also that we should curb our desires, and confine them in the narrowest bounds we can; so as not to affect more in quantity, or better in quality, than our nature and state do require: if we must have superfluities, if we can only relish dainties, we shall never be pleased; for as nature hath limits, and is content with little; as there is no state in this World, the exigencies whereof may not be answered with a competence; so curiosity is an infinite, and insatiable thing: *He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man; he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich*; that is, he which is curious and nice in his desires, will never have enough: The rule, which (according to St. Paul) should regulate our desires is this; *Having food and rayment, let us with them be satisfied*: if this

*Ita plerumque contingit, ut dum aliquos fratres nostros in quantumlibet requie constitutos in mediis nostris anxietatibus cogitamus, non parva ex parte recreemur. tanquam & nos ideo ipsi quietius tranquilliusque vivamus. Aug. Ep. 144.*

Rom. 12. 15.

Rom. 12. 15.

1 Cor. 12. 26.

Phil. 37. 8.

1 Pet. 5. 7.

Phil. 37. 5.

Phil. 4. 6.

Matt. 6. 31.

*Ἡ δὲ αὐτῆς ἀποταξίης ἀποταξίης οἱ ἡμεῖς αὐτοὶ δὲ οὐκ ἐπιθυμοῦμεν. Epic. ad Menæc.*  
*Ventre nihil nobis frugalius. Juv. Sat. 5.*

Prov. 21. 17.

*Αἱ χεῖρες ὁρῶσιν ὁρῶσιν αὐταρκείᾳ πικρῇ ἐστὶν. Cl. Alex. Pad. 2. 1.*  
1 Tim. 6. 8.



this will satisfy us, we may easily obtain satisfaction; a moderate industry with God's blessing, will procure so much; God hath promised to bestow it; if this will not suffice, there is no sure way of getting or keeping more; As God is no-wise obliged to provide us superfluities, or concerned to relieve our extravagant longings; so we may fear that Providence will be ready to cross us in our cares and endeavours tending to those purposes; so that we shall be disappointed in the procurement, or disturbed in the fruition of such needless things: However he that is most scant in his desires, is likely to be most content in his mind: *He (as Socrates said) is nearest the Gods (who needs nothing) that needeth fewest things.*

*Si ad naturam vires nunquam eris pauper; si ad opinionem, nunquam dives. Epic. Sen. Ep. 16.*

In fine, contentedness doth import, that whatever our condition is, our minds and affections should be modelled, and squared just according to it; so that our inclinations be compliant, our desires be congruous thereto, so that easily we can comport with the inconveniences, can relish the comforts, can improve the advantages sticking thereto; otherwise like an ill-made Garment, it will fit unhandsome upon us, and be troublesome to us. It is not usually our condition it self, but the unsuitableness thereof to our disposition and desires (which soureth all its sweets, and rendreth its advantages fruitless) that createth discontent; for (although it be very mean) others bear the same chearfully; many would be glad thereof; if therefore we will be content, we must bend our inclinations, and adapt our desires to a correspondence with our state.

*Ὁ ἐλαχίστων δέουμένων ἐστὶν γινῆσθαι δεινόν. Socr. in Xenoph. Apomn.*

If we are rich, we should get a large and bountiful heart, otherwise our Wealth will hang loose about us; the care and trouble in keeping it, the suspicion and fear of losing it, the desire of amplifying it, the unwillingness to spend or use it, will bereave us of all true satisfaction therein, and render it no less unfavoury to us, than unprofitable to others.

If we are poor, we should have a frugal, provident, industrious mind, sparing in desires, free from curiosity, willing to take pains, able to digest hardships, otherwise the straitness of our condition will pinch and gall us.

Are we high in dignity or reputation? we then need a mind well ballasted with sober thoughts, otherwise the Wind of Vanity will drive us into absurd behaviours, thence will dash us upon disappointments, and consequently will plunge us into vexation and discontent.

Are we mean and low? we need a meek and lowly, a calm and steady spirit: not affecting little respects, or resenting the want of them; apt to pass over or to bear quietly petty affronts and neglects; not apt to be moved by Words signifying contempt or disdain: (else being fretted with such things, which in this ill-natur'd and hard-hearted World we may be sure often to meet with) we shall be uneasy in our minds, and impatiently wish a change of our state.

These, and the like dispositions and affections of soul this duty containeth, or requireth: from hence should arise a correspondent external demeanour, and such actions as these which follow:

1. We should restrain our Tongues from all unseemly and unfavoury expressions, implying dissatisfaction in God's proceedings, or displeasure at his Providence; arguing desperation or distrust in God; such as were those of the discontented and impatient *Israelites*; *They (saith the Psalmist) spake against God; they said, can God furnish a table in the wilderness? behold he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also, can he provide flesh for his people?* Such as they used, of whom the Prophet saith — *When they shall be hungry, they will fret themselves, and curse their King and their God*; as those in the *Apocalypse*, who being afflicted with deserved judgments, did blaspheme the name of God, which had power over those plagues — *blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and sores.* Into such profane enormities of language is discontent apt to break forth, questioning the power of God, or his willingness to succour us; venting wrath and displeasure toward him; charging him foolishly with injustice, or with unkindness, or with negligence, or with impotency; the abstaining from which

*Psalm. 78. 19. Numb. 21. 5.*

*Isa. 3. 21. Rev. 19. 9. 11. 21.*



Job 1. 22.

Οὐκ ἔδωκεν ἀφροσύνην τῷ θεῷ.  
 Ἀλλ' ἔχει σιγή, μὴ δὲ ἐπίτρεψεν ὃ  
 θεοῖσι. Hom. Od. 7.

behaviour, under the sense of his bitter Calamities, is a great commendation of Job; *In all this* ('tis said) *Job sinned not, neither charged God foolishly.*

2. We should indeed forbear any the least complaint or murmuring, in regard to the dispensations of Providence;

or upon dissatisfaction in the state allotted us: St. Jude saith, that God in the last day will come, to execute judgment, and to convince men of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him; these (subjoyneth he)

are γογυσταί, μεμψιμοῖοι, i. murmurers, that complain of their lot: which signifieth the heinousness and extreme dangerousness of this practice. Wherefore doth the living man complain? is the Prophet's question, implying it to be an unreasonable and blameable practice. Wherefore the advice of David is good; to suppress all complaint, to be still and silent in such cases: *Be still* (saith he) *and know*

Psal. 46. 10.

4. 4. 37. 7.

Psal. 39. 9.

— σιωπῇ Πάσχων ἄλγεα πολλὰ βίας  
 ὑποδύωμαι. αἰδῶν. Od. v.

Job. 40. 4.

Isa. 53. 7.

*on my mouth.* And thus our Saviour, when he was oppressed and afflicted, opened not his mouth.

Δόξα τῷ θεῷ πάντων ἔνεκεν. Οὐ γὰρ  
 παύσομαι τὸ ἐπιλέγων αἰεὶ ἐπὶ πταισ  
 μοι τοῖς συμβαίνουσιν. Chryl. ad Olymp.  
 Ep. 11.

Psal. 119. 75.

Job. 1. 21.

Yea it is our duty, in these cases, to spend our breath in declaring our satisfaction in God's dealing with us: acknowledging his wisdom, justice and goodness therein; blessing and praising him for all that hath befallen us; each of us confessing after David, *I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me*; imitating Job, who upon the loss of all his goods did say no more than this; *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*

Jer. 5. 5.

Job. 36. 21.

4. We should abstain from all irregular, unlawful and unworthy courses toward the removal or remedy of our needs, or crosses, chusing rather to abide quietly under their pressure, than by any unwarrantable means to relieve, or relax our selves; rather bearing patiently, than violently, like those in the Prophet, *breaking our yoke, and bursting our bands. Take heed, regard not iniquity; for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.* We should rather continue poor, than by couzenage, or rapine, endeavour to raise our fortune; we should rather lye under disgrace and contempt, than by sinful or sordid compliances strive to acquire the respect and favour of men; we should rather willingly rest in the lowest condition, than do as those, who by disturbing the World, by fomenting disorders and factions, by supplanting their neighbours Welfare, by venting slanders and detractions, do labour to amplify their estate: We should rather endure any inconvenience or distress, than have recourse to ways of evading them, disallowed by God; doing as the Jews did, who in their straits, against the declared pleasure of God,

Jer. 42. 15.

2. 18. 13.

Isa. 30. 2. 35.

6. 31. 1.

Ezek. 17. 15.

Hos. 7. 11, 13.

1 Cor. 6. 7.

1 Pet. 3. 17.

4. 19.

set their faces toward Egypt, strengthened themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, trusted in the staff of that broken reed. In neglect or diffidence toward God, to embrace such aids, is (as God in the Prophet declareth) a very blameable and mischievous folly: Ephraim (saith he) *is like a silly dove without heart; they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria — Wo unto them, for they have fled from me; destruction unto them, because they have transgressed against me.* We may consider how St. Paul reproveth the Corinthians for seeking a redress of wrong, scandalous and dishonourable to the Church. *Now therefore it is utterly a fault among you, that ye go to law one with another; Why do ye not rather take wrong; why do ye not rather suffer your selves to be defrauded? even to right your selves in a way, whereby any dishonour may come to God, or damage to his Church is not to be approved; and better it is in the Apostle's judgment to bear any injury or damage our selves, Better it is* (saith St. Peter) *if the will of God be so, that we suffer for well-doing, than to do ill. And, Let them, who suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creatour; is another whollom advice of that great Apostle.*

5. We



5. We should, notwithstanding any adversity, proceed in our affairs (such as God requireth, or reason putteth us upon) with alacrity, courage and industry; performing however, so far as our circumstances do permit, what is good and fit for us: No disappointment or cross, no straits or grievances of condition should render us listless, or lazy, but rather it should quicken and inflame our activity; this being a good way to divert us from the sense of our misfortunes, and to comfort us under their pressure; as also the readiest way to remove or to abate them, *τὸ παρὸν δὲ δεῖν, to order the present well*, whatever it be; to make the best of a bad matter, to march forward whither reason calls (how difficultly soever, or slowly it be) in a rough or dirty way; not to yield to difficulties, but resolutely to encounter them, to struggle lustily with them; to endeavour with all our might to surmount them; are acts worthy of a manly reason and courage; to direct ill accidents to good ends, and improve them to honest uses, is the work of a noble virtue. If a bad game be dealt us, we should not presently throw up, but play it out so well as we can; so perhaps we may save somewhat, we shall at least be busie till a better come. *Put thy trust in the Lord, and be doing good*, is the *Psalmist's* advice in such a case; and it is a practice necessary to the procuring and maintaining content: If we be not otherwise well employed, we shall be apt in our thoughts, to melancholize, and dote upon our mischances, the sense of them will fasten upon our spirits, and gnaw our hearts.

Κερδαίνεσθαι τὸ παρὸν σὺν διλογισίᾳ  
Ant. 4. 26. 6. 2.

Τὸ παρὸν ἀπευθύνειν πρὸς οὐσίτητα  
καὶ δικαιοσύνην. Id. 12. 1.

Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior  
ito.

Psal. 37. 3.

6. We should behave our selves fairly and kindly toward the instruments and abettors of our adversity; toward those who brought us into it, and those who detain us under it by keeping off relief, and those who forbear to afford the succour we might expect; forbearing to express any wrath or displeasure, to exercise any revenge or enmity toward them; but rather, even upon that score, bearing good will, and expressing kindness toward them; not only as to our brethren, whom, according to the general Law of Charity, we are bound to love, but as to the servants of God in this particular case, and the instruments of his pleasure toward us; considering, that by maligning or molesting them, we do express ill resentments of God's dealing with us, and in effect through their sides do wound his Providence; thus did the good King behave himself toward Shimei, when he was bitterly reproached and cursed by him; not suffering (upon this account, because he was God's instrument of afflicting himself) that any harm should be done unto him; thus the holy Apostles being reviled did bless, being defamed did intreat; thus our Lord demeaned himself toward his spiteful adversaries; who, when he was reviled, did not revile again; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but committed it to him that judgeth righteously. In all these cases we should at least observe the rules and advices of the wise Man; Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me, I will render to the man according to his work; Say thou not, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee.

2 Sam. 16. 7.

1 Cor. 4. 12.

1 Pet. 2. 23.

Prov. 24. 29.

20. 22.

Discontent usually consisteth not so much in displeasure for the things we suffer, as at the persons who bring them on us, or who do not help to rid us from them; it is their presumed injury or discourtesie which we do fret at; such passions therefore toward men being discarded, our evils presently will become supportable, and content easily will ensue. As men in any sickness or pain, if their friends are about them (affording comfort or assistance) do not seem to feel any thing, and forbear complaining; so if the World about us doth please us, if we bear no disaffection or grudge toward any person in view, our adversity will appear less grievous, it will indeed commonly be scarce sensible to us.

In these and such like acts, the duty and virtue of contentedness doth especially reside; or it is employed and exercised by them: And so much may suffice for the explication of its nature; I come now to consider the way of attaining it, intimated by St. Paul here, when he saith, *I have learned*.



## S E R M O N VI.

## Of CONTENTMENT.

P H I L. iv. 11.

*I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.*

**T**HESE Words signify how contentedness may be attained, or how it is produced: It is not an endowment innate to us; it doth not arrive by chance into us; it is not to be purchased by any price; it springeth not up of its self, nor arriseth from the quality of any state: but it is a product of discipline; *I have learned.*

It is a question debated in *Plato*, *εἰ διδασκὸν ἢ ἀγερὸν*, whether *Virtue be to be learned*, *St. Paul* plainly resolveth it in this case by his own experience and testimony.

*Non dat natura virtutem ars est bonum fieri. Sen. Ep. 89.*  
*Virtus etiam si quosdam impetus ex natura sumit, tamen perficienda doctrina est. Quintil. 12. 2.*

What *Seneca* saith in general of virtue (*Nature giveth not Virtue; it is an art to become good*) is most true of this virtue; it is an art, with which we are not born, no more than with any other art or science; the which, as other arts, cannot be acquired without studious application

of mind, and industrious exercise: No art indeed requireth more hard study and pain toward the acquiry of it, there being so many difficulties, so many obstacles in the way thereto: We have no great capacity, no towardly disposition to learn it; We must, in doing it, deny our carnal sense, we must settle our wild fancy, and suppress fond conceits; we must bend our stiff and stubborn inclinations; we must repress and restrain wanton desires; we must allay and still tumultuous passions; we must cross our humour, and curb our temper; which to do is a hard chapter to learn; Much consideration, much practice, much contention and diligence are required thereto.

Hence it is an art which we may observe few do much study; and of the students therein few are great proficient; so that *Qui sit, Mecenas? Horace's* question, *How comes it to pass, that no body liveth content with the lot assigned by God?* wanted not sufficient ground.

However it is not like the *Quadrature of the circle*, or the *Philosophers Stone*, an art impossible to learned, and which will baffle all study: there are examples which shew it to be obtainable; there are rules and precepts, by observing which we may arrive to it.

And it is certainly a most excellent piece of learning; most deserving our earnest study: no other science will yield so great satisfaction, or good use; all other sciences, in comparison thereto, are dry and fruitless curiosities; for were we Masters of all other knowledge, yet wanted the skill of being content, we should not be wise or happy; happiness and discontent are *ἀνίσταται* (things incompatible.)

But how then may this skill be learned: I answer, chiefly (divine grace concurring) by these three ways. 1. By understanding the rules and precepts, wherein the practice thereof consisteth. 2. By diligent exercise, or application of those rules to practice; whereby the habit will be produced. 3. By seriously considering, and impressing upon our minds those rational inducements (suggested by the nature and reason of things) which are apt to persuade the practice thereof. The *first* way I have already endeavoured to declare; the *second* wholly dependeth upon the will and endeavour of the learner; the *third*



I shall now insist upon, propounding some rational considerations, apt (by God's help) to perswade contentedness, and serving to cure the malady of discontent. They may be drawn from several heads; from God, from our selves, from our particular condition or state; from the World or general state of men here; from the particular state of other men in comparison to ours; from the nature and consequences of the duty itself: Every thing about us well examined and pondered, will minister somewhat inducing and assisting thereto.

I. In regard to God we may consider, that equity doth exact, and gratitude requireth, and all reason dictateth, that we should be content; or that in being discontented we behave our selves very unbecomingly and unworthily, are very unjust, very ingrateful, and very foolish toward him.

1. Equity doth exact this duty of us, and in performing it we act justly toward God, both admitting his due right, and acknowledging his good exercise thereof; That saying in the Gospel, *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?* is a most evident maxime of equity; it is therefore the natural right, and prerogative of God (as the Creator and Preserver, and consequently the absolute Lord, Owner and Governour of all things) to assign his station, and allot his portion to every person, as he judgeth good and convenient; it is most just that inviolably he should enjoy this right; He being also infinitely wise and good, it is likewise most just to acknowledge that he doth perfectly well manage this right; Now by contentful submission to God's disposal of things, we do worthily express our due regard to both these, avowing his right, and approving his exercise thereof; but by discontent and regret at what happeneth, we do in effect injure God in both those respects, disavowing his right, and impeaching his management. We do thereby so renounce his right, as (so far as conceit and wish do reach) to invade it, and usurp it to our selves: signifying, that in our opinion things ought not to be ordered according to his judgment and pleasure, but after our fancy and humour; we claim to our selves the privilege of controlling his estate, and dispensing his goods, so as to be our own carvers, and to assume to our selves so much as we think good; we imply, that, if we were able, we would extort the power out of his hands, and manage it our selves, modelling the World according to our conceits and desires.

We do also (since we cannot but perceive the other attempt of dispossessing God to be frivolous and fruitless) in effect charge God with mis-demeanour, with iniquity or infirmity in his distribution and disposal of things; intimating, that in our opinion he doth not order them so justly, or so wisely as might be (not so well as we in our Wisdom and Justice should order them) for did we conceive them managed for the best, we could not but judge it most unreasonable to be aggrieved, or to complain: so heinously insolent, and unjust are we in being discontent. In earnest, Which is most equal, that God should have his Will, or we? For shame we shall say, God: Why then do we not contentedly let him have it?

'Tis indeed, if we consider it, the highest piece of injustice that we can be guilty of; exceeding that which we commit in any other sort of disobedience. For as in any State seditious Mutinying is the greatest crime, as most directly violating the Majesty, and subverting the authority of the Prince; so in the World, none may be supposed more to offend and wrong its Sovereign Governour, than such malecontents, who dislike and blame his proceedings: Even a Heathen could teach us, that it is our duty to *subject our mind to him that administred all things, as good Citizens to the Law of the Common-wealth*; if we do not we are rebellious and seditious, which is the highest pitch of injustice toward our most gracious Sovereign.

Again, there can be no greater injury, or affront offered to God, than to *give him the lie*, by questioning his veracity or fidelity; this discontent plainly doth involve: for God hath expressly declared himself ready upon all occasions to do us good; he hath promised to *care for us*, and *never to forsake us*, or leave us destitute; which Word of his if we did not distrust, and take him to be unfaithful, we could not be discontent: As no man is displeased with his condition, or suspicious of want, who knoweth that he hath abundant supply of all that

1 Sam. 3. 18.

Matt. 20. 17.

Multos inveni  
quos adversus  
homines, adver-  
sus Deos nomi-  
nem. Sen. Ep.  
93.

Τὸ αὐτὸ γνώμῃν ἀποτάσσιν τοῖς θεοῖς  
οἰκόντες τὰ ὅλα, καθάπερ οἱ ἀγαθοὶ πολῖται  
τῷ νόμῳ τῆς πόλεως. Arr. 1. 12.

John 5. 10.

Matt. 6. 27.

36.

Heb. 13. 5.



that he can need in a sure place; that he hath a person most able, most willing, most faithful engaged to succour him; so did we believe God to be true, who hath promised to help us, we could not be discontented for fear of any want.

We must at least in so doing, suspect God to be deficient in goodness toward us, or unwilling to help us, or we must apprehend him impotent; and unable to perform what he would, and what he hath promised, for us (like those Infidels, who said; *Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Can he give bread also, can he provide flesh for his people?*) which conceits of God are also very unworthy, and injurious to him.

Psal. 78. 19.

2. Gratitude requireth of us this duty; for we having no right or title to any thing; all that we have coming from God's pure bounty; he having upon us all (whatever our condition comparatively is, or may seem to us) freely conferred

*Iniquus est qui muneris sui ar'itrium danti non relinquit, avidus qui non lucri loco habet quod accipit, sed damni quod reddidit, Gr. Sen. ad Polyb. 29.*

many great benefits, common to all men among us (our being, life, reason, capacity of eternal happiness, manifold spiritual blessings, incomparably precious and excellent) we in all reason should be thankful for these; without craving more, or complaining for the want of other things. Whereas also all events (how cross soever to our sensual conceits, or appetites) are by God designed, and dispensed for our good, gratitude requireth, that we should thank God for them, and not murmur against them.

Surely if instead of rending God thanks for all the excellent gifts which he most liberally (without any previous obligation to us, or desert of ours) hath bestowed on us, and continueth to bestow, we fret, and quarrel, that he doth not in smaller matters seem to cocker us, we are extremely ingrateful, and disingenuous toward him. If any great Person here should freely bestow on us gifts of huge value (high preferment, or much Wealth) but with good reason, as we might presume, should withhold from us some trifle, that we fancy or dote upon, should we not be very unworthy, if we should take it ill and be angry with him for that cause? The case is plainly the same; God hath in the frankest manner bestowed on us innumerable and inestimable goods, incomparison whereto any comfort or convenience of our state here is very trivial and despicable; Are we not therefore very ingrateful, if we heinously resent the want of any such things; if upon any such account we disgust his Providence? Do we not deal, beyond all expression, unworthily with God, in so much undervaluing the goods which he hath given us, or doth offer us, and hath put in our reach? He hath made us capable of the greatest goods imaginable, and faithfully upon easie terms proffereth them to us; he even tendereth himself (himself, the immense and all-comprehending good, the fountain of all joy and bliss) to be fully enjoyed by us; his wisdom he offereth to instruct and guide us, his power to protect and guard us, his fulness to supply us, his goodness to comfort us; he offereth his love and favour to us, in having which we virtually and in effect have all things; becoming thereby, in the highest degree, rich and honourable and happy; And is it not then outrageous unworthiness to prize any other thing (any petty accommodation of this transitory life, any pitiful toy here) so much, as to be displeased for the want thereof; as if all this were not enough to satisfy our needs, or satiate our desires; as if notwithstanding all these immense effusions (yea as it were profusions) of bounty upon us, we could be indigent or unhappy?

Job. 2. 10.

*Shall we (to use that holy and most ingenuous consideration of Job) receive so much good from the bountiful hand of God, and shall we not contentedly receive, or bear so small evils from him?* Evils indeed in name, and to gross sense, but

*Εὐχαριστῶ σοι πάτερ, ὁ ποιητὰ τοῦ πάντων ἀνθρώπων ὅτι ἀχόντας ἡμᾶς δι' οὐδὲν, Gr. said Philagrius in a grievous disease. Naz. Ep. 66.*

*Ἐπειδὴν τὸ μὴ πάχυν ἐν ἡμῶν, ὅτι γὰρ πᾶσιν παροχρηδαίνο, τὸ εὐρεῖν, καὶ τὸ δ' χαλεπεῖν. Naz. de se. Ep. 63.*

not so in reality, not so in effect, at least not so in God's design; but rather things very convenient and profitable for us; which is another aggravation of our ingratitude; for,

Are we not also very ingrateful in misapprehending, and disliking that, which God doeth out of very gracious intentions toward us; in loathing his fatherly and friendly dispensations; the fatherly chastisements and friendly disciplines, which he unwillingly is forced (is I say forced by his own great love, and by our pressing needs) to inflict or impose upon us? Surely our ill opinion of or despising (as the



the *wise-Man* calleth it) these unpleasant blessings is no small fault; Neither will our not discerning (out of affected dulness, and stupid pravity not discerning) the wisdom of God's methods, and the wholesomeness of the means he useth to better us, excuse us from foul ingratitude.

3. Again, upon many accounts, reason farther dictateth in respect to God, that we should be content: because it is most reasonable to acquiesce in God's choice of our state, he being infinitely more wise than we, and infinitely better understanding what is good for us than we can do: because he is well affected to us, and loveth us more than we do ourselves; because he hath a just right, and irresistible power to dispose of us, the which (whatever we can do, however we resent it) he will effectually make use of, whence it is extremely foolish to be discontent: foolish it is to be dissatisfied with the results of his Wisdom, adhering to our vain apprehensions, foolish to distrust his goodness in compliance with our fond self-love; foolish to contest his unquestionable right and uncontrollable power, having nothing but meer impotency to oppose against them; no less than downright madness it is to fret and fume at that which we can no wise help, to bark at that which lodgeth in heaven so far high above us, to sollicit deaf necessity with our ineffectual Wailings; for if we think, that our displeasure will affect God, that our complaints will incline him to alter our condition, or comply with our wishes, we do conceit vainly, and without any ground; sooner may we, by our imagination, stop the Tides of the Sea, or turn the Streams of Rivers backward; sooner, by our cries, may we stay the Sun, and change all the courses of the Stars, than by our passionate resentments or moanful clamours we can check the current of affairs, or alter that state of things, which is by God's high decree established: discontented behaviour will rather fasten our condition, or remove it into a worse place; as it highly doth offend God, and increaseth our guilt, so it moveth God to continue, and to augment our evils. Thus lifting up our Eyes to heaven, and considering the reference our disposition and demeanour hath to God, will induce us to bear our case contentedly.

II. Again, Reflecting upon our selves, we may observe much reason to be content with our state; in whatever capacity we look upon our selves, it in reason becometh us, we in duty are obliged to be so.

As men and creatures we naturally are indigent and impotent; we have no just claim to any thing, nor any possession maintainable by our power; all that we have, or can have, cometh from most pure courtesie and bounty; wherefore how little soever is allowed us, we have no wrong done us, nor can we justly complain thereof. Such beggars as we are must not pretend to be churlers; if any thing be given us we may be glad, we should be thankful. It is for those who have a right and a power to maintain it, to resent and expostulate, if their due be withheld; but for us that never had any thing, which we could call our own; that have no power to get or keep any thing; for us that came into the World naked and defenceless, that live here in continual, absolute and arbitrary dependance for all our livelihood and subsistence, to contest with him that maintaineth us, or to complain of his dealing, is ridiculously absurd and vain.

Upon a moral account we have less reason to challenge ought, or to complain of any thing; for we deserve nothing but evil: If we rightly esteem and value ourselves, any thing will seem good enough for us, any condition will appear better than we deserve: duly examining the imperfections and infirmities of our nature, the disorder and depravedness of our hearts, the demeanours and enormities of our lives, we cannot but apprehend, that we are even unworthy of the crumbs which fall from our master's table; we cannot but acknowledge with the good Patriarch, that we are less than the least of God's mercies. Considering our natural unworthiness, we shall see that we deserve not so much as those common benefits which all men enjoy, and without which we cannot subsist; so that in regard to them we shall be ready to acknowledge with the Psalmist, Lord what is man that thou takest knowledge of him, or the Son of man, that thou makest account of him? Trying our hearts and examining our ways, we shall soon discover it to be abundant mercy, that we



are not utterly depriv'd of all good things, stript of all comforts; yea dis-  
 possessed of our very being and life it self; that we are obliged to acknowledge  
 Lam. 3. 22. with those in the *Lamentations*, *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not con-*  
*sumed, because his compassions fail not.* Were we far better than we are, yet it  
 would not become us to contest with him, to whose disposal and judgment  
 Job 9. 12, &c. we are subject; as *Job* teacheth us: *Behold* (saith he) *God taketh away, who*  
*can hinder him, who will say unto him, what doest thou? If he will not with-*  
 \* Κήτη draw his anger, the proud \* *helpers do stoop under him; how much less shall I*  
 (Job 9. 32.) *answer him, and chuse out my words to reason with him; whom though I were*  
*righteous, I would not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge; but*  
 for us, men so unrighteous and guilty, to debate with, to question the Pro-  
 ceedings of our Judge, it is much more unseemly.

Nothing can be more absurd, than for Men so deeply indebted, than for  
 sinners so very obnoxious to Wrath, to be aggrieved in any state: Shall we,  
 who are conscious to our selves of so many great sins against our God; who  
 by wilful transgressions, or slothful neglects, have so much affronted and of-  
 fended him; who have so little requited his love, and so much abused his pa-  
 tience; who have born so little fruit, and render'd him so little service, shall  
 we be angry that our humour is not pleased in all things? Shall we affect to  
 swim in plenty, to wallow in pleasure, to bask our selves in ease; to be fed  
 with dainties, to be gaily cloathed, to flourish in a brave and splendid condi-  
 tion, to be worshipped and honoured, who deserve not the meanest compe-  
 tence, or lowest respect, to whom it is a great favour that we are permitted to  
 subsist, whom strict justice would often have cast into utter misery and discon-  
 solateness? It is not surely for such persons to be dissatisfied with any thing in  
 this World, but to bless God's exceeding mercy, that they abide there on this  
 side of the bottomless pit; 'tis their part, with most submissive patience, to  
 Mic. 7. 9. bear whatever is inflicted on them, humbly saying with him in the *Prophet*, *I*  
*will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.* Seeing,  
 whatever our crosses or sufferings be, we cannot but confess to God with those  
 Ezr. 9. 13. in *Ezra*, *Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve;* being gainers  
 upon the matter, having so much of our debt remitted in effect, being in com-  
 parison to what was due to us very tolerably, yea very favourably dealt with,  
 Why should we be dissatisfied? If in such cases men should deal so favourably  
 with us, we should be much pleased, and ready to thank them; Why then  
 should we take it ill of God, when he even in his hardest proceedings  
 against us, expresth so much indulgence and mercy?

If we must be displeased, and lust to complain, we have reason much ra-  
 ther to accuse our selves, than to exclaim at Providence, to bewail our sins,  
 than to deplore our fortune: for our evils are not indeed so much the volun-  
 tary Works of God, who *doth not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of*  
 Lam. 3. 33. *men*, as the natural products of our sin, which we do willfully commit: It is  
 'Αυταίρετα (as the *Prophet* speaketh) *our sins that withhold good things from us;* and bring  
 Jer. 5. 25. evil things upon us: *Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their*  
 Psal. 107. 17. *iniquities, are afflicted.* We make adversity necessary or expedient for us,  
 then we cry out upon it: We labour in Planting, but cannot brook *the fruit*  
 Jer. 17. 10. *of our doings;* we, like prodigals, fling away our estate in wanton profusions,  
 21. 14. 32. then complain of want; we affect and chuse the causes, but loath, and cannot  
 19. 6. 19. abide the certain consequences; so fond in our conceits, so perverse are we in  
 our affections: *Wherefore doth the living man complain, for the punishment of*  
 Lam. 3. 39. *his sins?* so well might the *Prophet* demand and expostulate.

We may farther, looking on our selves, consider our selves as servants to  
 God, or rather as slaves, absolutely subject to his disposal; And shall any  
 servant, shall a mere slave presume to chuse his place, or determine his rank  
 in the family? Shall he appoint to himself what office he will discharge, what  
 garb he shall go in, what diet he must have, what he will do, and how he  
 shall be accommodated? Is it not fit that all these things should be left to our  
 Master's discretion and pleasure? it is most reasonable that we should thorough-  
 ly acquiesce in his determination: even a *Pagan Philosopher* could teach us,  
 that



that this is reasonable; who thus piously directeth his Speech to God: *For the rest use me to what thou pleasest. I do consent unto thee, and am indifferent. I refuse nothing which seemeth good to thee; lead me whither thou wilt; put on me what garment thou pleasest: Wilt thou have me to be a governour or a private man, to stay at home or to be banished away, to be poor or to be rich? I will, in respect to all these things, apologize for thee with men;* thus did Epictetus

say, and such speech well becometh our relation to God: Servants should be content with their Masters appointments and allowances; they should not only themselves forbear to find fault with, but be ready to maintain his proceedings against any, who shall presume to reprehend or blame them. Especially such servants as we are, who *after we have done all things commanded us, must acknowledge that we are unprofitable servants;* such as can bring no considerable benefit to our Lord, or any-wise advance his state; such as therefore cannot challenge any Wages from him, more than he out of mere favour is pleased to allow: Could we, by our labours, enrich God, or raise him in dignity, or procure delight to him, it might seem congruous that he should answerably reward us; but as he getteth nothing by us, so we cannot require any thing from him: our best services do indeed rather need pardon, than deserve any reward: No man hath lived so well, that he can pretend any thing from God, that he is not indeed much behind-hand in his accounts with God, having received from God far more of benefit than he can return to him in service: No man, without extream presumption and arrogance, can offer to prescribe, in what measure, or what manner God should reward him.

Again, if we consider our selves as the children of God, either by birth or nature, or by adoption and grace, How can we be discontent for any thing? Have we not thence great reason to hope, or rather to be confident, that we shall never want any good thing (necessary or convenient for us) that no great evil shall ever oppress us? For is not God hence by paternal disposition inclined, is he not in a manner, by paternal duty, engaged, in all needful occasions, to supply and succour us? Can we (without great profaneness, and no less folly) surmise, that he, which is so immensely good, will be a bad (an unkind, or a neglectful) Father to us? No: as there is no other Father in goodness comparable to him, so none, in real effects of benignity, can come near him; so our Lord assureth us: *If ye (saith he) being evil, know how to give good things to your children; How much more will your heavenly Father give good things to his children that ask him?*

If we consider our selves as Christians, we have still more reason to practise this duty: As such, we are not only possessed of goods abundantly sufficient to satisfy our desires; we have hopes able to raise our minds above the sense of all present things; we have entertainments that ever may divert our minds, and fill our hearts with comfort; but we have also an assurance of competent supplies of temporal goods; for, *Godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise both of the present life, and of that which is to come:* and, *If we seek first the Kingdom of heaven, and its righteousness, all these things shall be added unto us.* It is indeed strangely unhandsome for a Christian ever to droop, or to be disconsolate; for a friend of God, and an heir of heaven to think he wants any thing, or fear that he shall ever want: for him, whose treasure and heart are above, to be so concerned with any thing here, as deeply to resent it.

Again, if we reflect upon our selves as rational men, How for shame can we be discontent? Do we not therein much disparage that excellent perfection of our nature? Is it not the proper work of reason to prevent things hurtful or offensive to us, when that may be done; to remove them, if they are removable; if neither of these can be compassed, to allay and mitigate them; so that we may be able well to support them? Is it not its principal use to drive away those fond conceits, and to quell those troublesome passions, which create, or foment disquiet, and displeasure to us? If it cannot do this, What doth it signifie? To what purpose have we it? Is not our condition really worse than that of brute beasts, if reason serveth only to discry the causes of trouble, but

Χρῶμαι λοιπὸν εἰς ὃ ἀνθέλῃς. Ὅτι  
μογνῶμαι σοι, ἴσος εἰμί. Οὐδὲν πα-  
ραιτῶμαι ἢ σοι δοκούντων. Ὅπου θέλῃς  
ἄγε, ὡς θέλῃς ἐδῶτα φοίδεις. Ἀρχεῖν  
με θέλῃς, ἰδοῦναι, μένειν, φεύγειν, πεί-  
νεσθαι, πλανεῖν; ἐγὼ σοι ὡς ἀπάντων  
τούτων πρὸς τὸς ἀνθρώπους ἀπολογήσο-  
μαι. Αἰγ. 2. 16.

Luc. 17. 10.

Matt. 7. 11.

1 Tim. 4. 8.

Matt. 6. 33.



cannot enable to bear it? All the reasons we have produced, and all that we shall produce against discontent, will, if we are reasonable men, and reason availerh any thing, have this effect upon us.

Wherefore considering our selves, our capacities, our relations, our actions, it is most reasonable to be content with our condition, and with whatever doth befall us.

## S E R M O N VII.

### Of CONTENTMENT.

P H I L. iv. 11.

*I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.*

III. **F**Arther, if we consider our condition, (be it what it will, how poor, how mean, how despicable and forlorn soever) we can have from it no reasonable ground of discontent,

i. Our condition in this World cannot (if rightly estimated, and well managed) be extremely bad, or sorrowful; nothing here can occur insupportable, or very grievous in it self; we cannot, if we please, want any thing considerable, and the defect whereof may not be supplied, or supported by far better enjoyments. If we have high opinions of some things, as very excellent, or very needful for us, it's no wonder, if we do want them, that our condition is unpleasent to us; if we take other things for huge evils, then, if they be incumbent on us, we can hardly scape being displeased; but if we thoroughly look through such things, and scan them exactly, valuing them, not according to fallacious impressions of sense, or illusive dreamings of fancy, but according to sound dictates of reason, we may find, that neither absence of the former, nor the presence of the latter doth make our condition much worse, or render our case deplorable.

Tert. de Pat.  
7.

Tα δ' ἀπ' ὑπομῶν δὲν ἡτέροπορος  
Εἰς τὰς τετραγώνους χροῖμα' ἐκ οἷς ἡ  
βίον. Socrat.

Vid. Plut. in  
Arist.

Si vis vacare animo, aut pauper sis oportet, aut pauperi similis.  
Multis ad Philosophandum oblitere divitiarum; paupertas expedita est, secreta est.  
Sen. Ep. 17.  
Sapius pauper, & fidelius ridet. Sen.  
Ep. 80.

We are, for instance, poor: that condition rightly weighed, is not so very sad: for what is poverty? what but the absence of a few superfluous things, which please wanton fancy rather than answer need; without which nature is easily satisfied, and which if we do not affect, we cannot want? what is it but to wear coarse clothes, to feed on plain and simple fare, to work and take some pains, to sit or go in a lower place, to have no heaps of cash, or hoards of grain, to keep no retinue, to have few friends, and not one flatterer? and what great harm in this? It is a state, which hath its no small conveniences and comforts, its happy fruits and consequences; which freeth us from many cares and distractions, from many troubles and crosses, from many encumbrances, many dangers, many temptations, many sore distempers of body and soul, many grievous mischiefs, to which Wealth is exposed; which maintaineth health, industry and sobriety; disposeth us to feed heartily, to move nimbly, to sleep sweetly; which preserveth us from luxury, from satiety; from sloth and unwieldiness. It yieldeth disposition of mind, freedom and leisure to attend the study of truth, the acquist of virtue. It is a state, which many have born with great cheerfulness; many (very wise men) have voluntarily embraced; which is allotted by



by divine Wisdom to most men; and which the best men often do endure; to which God hath declared an especial regard, which the mouth of truth hath proclaimed happy; which the Son of God hath dignified by his choice, and sanctified by his partaking deeply thereof; and can such a condition be very loathsome, can it reasonably displease us?

Again, thou art, suppose, fallen into disgrace, or from honour and credit art depressed into a state of contempt and infamy? this also rightly prized is no such wretchedness; for what doth this import? what, but a change of opinion in giddy men, which thou dost not feel, which thou art not concerned in, if thou pleasest; which thou never hadst reason much to regard, or at all to rely upon? what is thy loss therein? it is the breaking of a bubble, the sinking of a Wave, the changing of a Wind, the cracking of a thing most brittle, the flipping away of a thing most fugacious and slippery; What is honour and fame, but thought, and what more flitting, what sooner gone away than a thought? and why art thou displeased at the loss of a thing so very slender and flimie? If thou didst know its nature, thou canst not be disappointed; if thou didst not, it was worth thy while to be thus informed by experience, that thou maiest not any more regard it. Is the contempt, thou hast incurred, from thy fault? bear the consequence thereof patiently, and do thy best by removing the cause to reverse the effect: is it undeserved and causeless? be satisfied in thy innocence, and be glad that thou art above the folly and injustice of those, who condemn thee. Let thy affections rather be employed in pity of theirs, than in displeasure for thy own case. Did (let me ask thee again) the good opinion of men please thee? that pleasure was fond and vain, and it is well thou art rid of it. Did it not much affect thee? why then dost thou much grieve at the loss thereof? Is not also thy fortune in this kind the same with that of the best men? have not those who have deserved most honour, been exposed to most contempt? But now (Job could say) *they that are younger than I have me in derision, — they abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.* And, I am, (could that great and good King say) *a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people; All they that see me, laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, — and, we are defamed, we are reviled, we are made as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things unto this day, could the holy Apostles say; and He is despised and rejected of men, — he was despised and we esteemed him not,* was said of our Lord himself: and can this condition then in just esteem be so very pitiful or grievous?

But thou art perhaps troubled because thou art wrongfully censured, odiously traduced and defamed, abused by slander, or by detraction; which asperseth thee with things whereof thou art no-wise guilty, or representeth thee in a character unworthy of thee: Be it so; what then; why doth this so much affect thee?

Is not every man subject to these things? are not the greatest men, are not the wisest men, are not the best men liable to the same? yea chiefly liable, excellency being the special mark of envy and obloquy? can any good men escape free of them among so many bad men, whose doings as goodness doth reproach, so it provoketh malignity? Canst thou imagine to pass thy days in so unjust and spiteful a World without incurring such bad usage? can so many vain, so many bold, so many lawless tongues be tied up, or kept within compass of truth, or equity? Wilt thou suffer it to be in the power of any man at his pleasure so easily to discompose and vex thee? because he will be bad, shalt thou be miserable? why dost thou not rather please thy self in the conscience of thy endeavouring to deserve and do well; in thy innocence, and clearness from the blame which they impose on thee; in thy having given no cause of such offence and outrage? why dost thou not rather pity their unworthiness and unhappiness, who stoop to so mean and base practices, than fret at them, as bad to thee? they do themselves far more mischief, than they can do thee.

And why dost thou not consider, that indeed thou art guilty of many faults, and full of real imperfections, so that no man can easily derogate from thee more than thou deservest: he may indeed tax thee unjustly, he may miss in the

Psal. 10. 14.  
35. 10. 68. 10.  
69. 33. 72. 4.  
13. 140. 12.  
146. 7. 147. 2.  
Luk. 6. 20.  
Jam. 2. 5.  
Isa. 66. 2.

Job 30. 1, 10.

Psal. 22. 6, 7.

1 Cor. 4. 12.

Isa. 53. 3.

Exempl. Jeremias. Chrysost. ad Olymp.

16  
Gratias ago Deo meo, quia dignus sum  
quem mundus odit. Hier. Ep. 39. (ad Ac-  
tellam.)

Ἄλλ' οἱ μὲν  
ἠδίκησαν,  
ἐγὼ δ' ἐκ  
ἠδίκημαι.  
Theod. Ep. 80.



the particulars of his charge, he may discover groundless contempt, and ill-will toward thee; but thou knowest thy self to be a grievous sinner, and it is just that thou shouldst be reproached, (God, for thy humiliation, or thy correction, may have ordered him, as *David* said he might have ordered *Shimei*, to curse thee) thou hast therefore more need to be humble in reflection on thy self, than to swell with disdain in regard to his injury.

Theodor. Ep. 83. Thou shouldst improve this dealing, and make it wholesome to thee, by taking occasion thence to correct thy real faults, and endeavouring to become truly more worthy; that so thy conscience may be a firm bulwark against all detraction and obloquy: In fine, satisfy thy self by committing thy soul with patience in well-doing unto thy Judge, who assuredly will do thee right, will protect thy reputation, and clear thy innocence: his judgment is only worth regarding, be little concerned with any other.

Again, Being disappointed and crossed in the success of their projects, or undertakings, is wont to put men, as they conceive, into a woful case: but why so? why (let me ask thee, who art discontented upon this score) didst thou build much expectation upon uncertainties? didst thou not foresee a possibility, that thy design might miscarry, and if so, why art thou not prepared to receive what happeneth? was it not an adventure, why then art thou troubled with thy chance? Is he not a silly gamester, that will fret and fume at a bad cast, or at the loss of a game? Didst thou refer the business to God's disposal and arbitrement? if not, thou deservedst to be crossed, and rather confess thy fault, than complain of thy fortune; if thou didst so, then be consistent with thy self, and acquiesce in his determination: In fine, what is thy loss, is't of thy care and pain? would it have been much better, that thou hadst been careless or idle? but hast thou not in lieu of them got some Wisdom and Experience? hast thou not (if thy attempt was reasonable and worthy) exercised thy wit, thy courage, thy industry? hast thou not (by thy defeat) got an opportunity to express equanimity and patience? if thou so improvest thy disappointment, thou art a gainer by thy loss, thou dost more than conquer by thy defeat: however since the gain, the credit, the preferment thou didst aim at and hast missed, are things in themselves of no great value, and such as thou maiest well live without, as other good men have done, thou canst not have much reason to be displeased upon this account, or to reckon thy condition disastrous.

But friends, will some say, have been unkind, have been ungrateful, have been fickle and false, have neglected, have deserted, have betrayed me; Phil. 55. 7. *It was not an enemy, that reproached me, then I could have born it, &c.* this is indeed commonly most grievous; yet being scanned will not render a man's condition so lamentable: for, such misbehaviour of friends is more their calamity than ours: the loss of bad friends is no damage, but an advantage; 'tis but the loss of a mischief, and a trouble: the fewer we come to have of such, the more time we save, the less trouble we meet with, the greater security we enjoy. The kindness we have shewed, the obligations we have put on such, are not quite lost, they will bring the rewards due to humanity and fidelity; it will yield satisfaction to us, that however we have been kind and faithful to them. The fidelity of remaining true friends may satisfy us; however if all other friendship should fail, there is one remains, worth millions of other friends, who can never prove unfaithful, or inconstant, who never will be unmindful of us, or deficient in kindness toward us.

Vid. Sen. Ep. 63. The death of friends doth, it may be, oppress thee with sorrow.

But canst thou lose thy best friend; canst thou lose the presence the conversation, the protection, the advice, the succour of God? is he not immortal, is he not immutable, is he not inseparable from thee? canst thou be destitute of friends, whilst he stands by thee? is it not an affront, an heinous indignity to him, to behave thy self, as if thy happiness, thy welfare, thy comfort had dependance on any other but him?

Vid. Greg. Naz. Ep. 202. is it not a great fault to be unwilling to part with any thing, when he calleth for it?

Neither



Neither is it a loss of thy friend, but a separation for a small time; he is only parted from thee as taking a little journey, or going for a small time to repose; within a while we shall be sure to meet again, and joyfully to congratulate, if we are fit, in a better place, and more happy state; *præmisimus*, *non amissimus*; we have sent him thither before, not quite lost him from us.

Thy friend, if he be a good man (and in such friendships only we can have true satisfaction) is himself in no bad condition and doth not want thee; thou canst not therefore reasonably grieve for him; and to grieve only for thy self is perverse selfishness and fondness.

But thou hast lost a great comfort of thy life, and advantage to thy affairs here? is it truly so? is it indeed an irreparable loss, even secluding the consideration of God, whose friendship repaireth all possible loss? what is it, I pray, that was pleasant, convenient, or useful to thee in thy friend; which may not in good measure be supplied here? was it a sense of hearty good-will, was it a sweet freedom of conversation, was it sound advice or kind assistance in thy affairs? and mayst thou not find those left, which are alike able, and willing to minister those benefits? may not the same means, which knit him to thee, conciliate others also to be thy friends? he did not alone surely possess all the good-nature, all the fidelity, all the Wisdom in the World, nor hath carried them all away with him? other friends therefore thou mayst find to supply his room: all good men will be ready, if thou art good, to be thy friends, they will heartily love thee; they will be ready to cheer thee with their sweet and wholesome society, to yield thee their best counsel and help upon any occasion: Is it not therefore a fond and unaccountable affection to a kind of personality, rather than want of a real convenience that disturbeth thee?

In fine, the same reasons, which in any other loss may comfort us, should do it also in this: neither a friend nor any other good thing we can enjoy is under any security of not soon losing it; our welfare is not annexed to one man no more than to any other inferior thing; this is the condition of all good things here to be transient and separable from us; and accordingly we should be affected toward them.

*Fragile fractum est, mortale mortuum est.*

But farther, it perhaps displeaseth us, that the course of the World doeth not go right, or according to our mind; that Justice is not well dispensed, that virtue is under hatches, that worth is not considered; that Industry is not rewarded, that innocence and modesty are trampled upon; that favour, partiality, corruption, flattery, craft, impudence do carry all before them; devouring all the encouragement due to honest industry: This may be observed, but why should it displease? art thou guilty of contributing to this? then mend; if not, then bear; especially seeing thou canst not help it; for so it hath always been, and ever will be in the World, that things never have gone there as the wisest judge, or the best men desire: there have never been good men enough to sway the World, nor will the few good men that are, be so active in promoting publick good, as bad are in driving on their private designs; doth not this course of things necessarily spring from the nature of men, which therefore we should no more be vexed at, than for that a Serpent hath poison, or that a Wasp hath a sting? we cannot wonder at it, why then should we be strangely affected by it? could any man ever have been pleased, if this were a sufficient cause of displeasure? However the World goes, we may yet make a tolerable shift, God is engaged competently to provide for us; that should satisfy us. God observeth these things no less than we, and he can easily hinder them, yet he thinketh good to suffer them; and shall not we do so likewise? there is in fine appointed a judgment hereafter, when all these things shall be redressed and set straight; when justice and virtue shall triumph, when integrity and industry shall find their due recompence; 'tis but a moment to that time, and till then we may rest satisfied.

Thus if we do survey and rightly state things, which cause discontent, and seem to render our condition hard and sad, we shall find, that not from the things,

*Cur doles si periisse non credis? cur impatienter feras subductum interitum quem credis reversurum? profectio est quam putas mortem. Tert. de Pat. 9. Sen. Ep. 63.*

*Impatientia in ejusmodi & spei nostræ male ominatur, & fidem prævaricatur. Ec. Tert. ibid.*

*Πῶς τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἀγαθόν, ἐαυτὸν τὰ πρᾶξις ὁρᾷ τὸ πᾶν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἀπομένον τὰ ἀγαθὰ τῆς ἐξουσίας; Naz. Or. 19.*

*Vid. Sen. Ep. 63.*



things, but from our selves all the mischief proceeds : We by our imagination give to the lightest things a Weight, and swell the smallest things into a vast bulk ; we fancy them very frightful and doleful, then we tremble and grieve at them. Mere names (the names of poverty, of disgrace, of defeat) do scare us, without consulting reason, and considering how little terrible the things are themselves. We follow silly prejudices, judging that highly good, which the vulgar admire, that very evil, which the weakest sort of men are wont to complain of ; hence so commonly doth our case seem grievous. But in truth there is no condition so bad, but if we manage it well and wisely, if we bend our mind to comply with it, if we moderate our passions about the accidents thereof, if we vigilantly embrace and enjoy the advantages thereof, may not be easily supportable, yea prove very comfortable to us ; it is our fond conceits, our froward humours, our perverse behaviours, which do create the trouble, which seemeth adherent to any condition, and embittereth every state ; which from any slight occasion doth create vexation, and turneth every event into disaster.

— usque adeo nulla est, sincera voluptas,  
Sollicitique aliquid laetis intervenit—  
Ovid.

ver all good things

*Assuescendum conditioni sua ; & quam  
minimum de illa querendum. & quicquid  
habet circa se commodi apprehendendum  
est : nihil tam acerbum est, ex quo non  
aquis animus solatium invenias. Sen.  
de Tranq. an. cap. 10.*

2. As there is no condition here perfectly and purely good (not deficient in some conveniencies, not blended with some troubles) so there is none so thoroughly bad, that it hath not somewhat convenient and comfortable therein ; seldom or never do forsake a man at once, or all mischiefs together assail him ; somewhat usually abideth, which well improved, or wisely enjoyed, may satisfy a Man, yea, render his estate comparable to theirs, who to vulgar eyes appear to be in the best condition : there is in every condition somewhat of good compensating for its evils, and reducing it to a balance with other more plausible states. We are, suppose

again, in poverty, (that instance I propound usually, as the most ordinary ground of discontent) but have we therewith good health ? then most rich men may envy us, and reasonably we should not exchange our state with many crazy Princes : have we therewith our liberty ? that is an inestimable good which often-times the greatest Men have wanted, and would have purchased with heaps of gold : have we therein a quiet mind, and a free use of our time ? It is that, which wisest men have prized above any Wealth, and which the chief men of the world would be glad to taste of : have we a clear reputation ? we have then the best good that any Wealth can yield, we have more than many can obtain in the most splendid fortune : have we any friends sticking to us ? that is more than the richest persons can assure themselves of, to whom it is near impossible to distinguish the friends of their persons from the flatterers of their fortune ; it is a privilege and solace, which Princes are hardly capable to arrive at : have we a bare competency, sufficient to maintain our life ? we thereby keep our appetites in better compass, and our faculties in greater Vigour ; we thence better relish all things ; we in consequence thereof avoid the burthens, the diseases, the vices of sloth and luxury : have we farther (as if we are not very bad, we shall in this case assuredly have, humanity disposing all men thereto) the compassion of men ; is not this somewhat better, than that envy, that ill-will, that obloquy, which usually do attend Wealth and Prosperity ? why then, if our poor estate hath so manifold conveniencies, do we so much distast it ? why do we so dwell and pore on the small inconveniencies we feel under it, over-looking or slighting the benefits we may enjoy thereby ? This indeed ordinarily is our folly and infirmity ; that the want of any little thing, which we fancy or affect, doth hinder us, from satisfaction in all other things ; *One dead fly causeth all our ointment to stink* ; the possession of a Kingdom will not keep us from being *heavy and displeased* (as *Ahab* was) if we cannot acquire a small vineyard near us ; on that one thing our head runs continually, our heart is wholly set, we can think on, we can taste nothing else ; the want of that notwithstanding all our affluence doth pinch us, our dainties thence do prove insipid, our splendours appear dim, every thing but that is a toy unto us : So capriciously, and unaccountably prone are we to discontent.

Pro. 27. 7.

Ecclef. 10. 1.

1 Kings 21. 1.

3. Is our condition (let me ask again) so extreamly bad, that it cannot be much worse ? Are we sunk to the bottom of all calamity ? No surely ; God's Provi-



Providence will not suffer, the state of things here can never admit that to be: here are succours always ready against extremities; our own Wit and Industry, the help of relations or friends, the natural pity and charity of our neighbours will preserve us from them; especially persons in any measure innocent can never come near them; there will therefore never fail some good matter of content in what remains; a few good things, well improved, may greatly solace us; but however, let us imagine our case to be the worst that can be; that a confluence of all temporal mischiefs and wants hath arrived, that we are utterly bereaved of all the comforts this World afforded; that we are stripped of all our Wealth, quite sunk in our reputation, deserted of every friend, deprived of our health and our liberty; that all the losses, all the disgraces, all the pains which poor Job sustained, or far more and greater than those, have together seized on us; yet we cannot have sufficient reason to be discontent; for that nevertheless we have goods left to us in our hands, or within our reach, far surpassing all those goods we have lost, much outweighing the evils we do undergo: When the World hath done its worst, we remain Masters of things incomparably better than it, and all it containeth; the possession whereof may (and if we be wise) will abundantly satisfy us. We are Men still, and have our reason left behind, which alone, in worth, exceedeth all the treasures of the World; in well using which, and thereby ordering all things for the best, we become more worthy, and more happy than the most fortunate fool on earth; we may therein find more true satisfaction, than any Wealth, or any Glory here can minister; We may have a good Conscience left, (the sense of having lived well heretofore, or at least a serious resolution to live well hereafter) and that is a *continual feast*, yielding a far more solid and savoury pleasure, than the most ample revenue can afford: We may have hope in God (the author and donour of all good things) and thereby far greater assurance of our convenient subsistence and welfare, than all present possessions can bestow; we have reserved a free access to the Throne of Grace, and thereby a sure means (grounded on God's infallible word and promise) of obtaining whatever is good for us; we have a firm right to innumerable spiritual blessings and privileges each of them justly valuable beyond whole Worlds of pelf; we can, in a word (we can if we please) enjoy God's favour, which immensely transcendeth all other enjoyments, which vastly more than countervail the absence of all other things; of this, by applying our selves to the love and service of God, we are infallibly capable; of this no worldly force or fortune can dispoil us; we having this, our condition cannot be poor, contemptible or pitiful; 'tis indeed thereby most rich, glorious and happy: For how can he be poor that hath the Lord of all things always ready to supply him; who hath God (as the Psalmist is wont to speak) to be *his portion for ever*? How can he be despicable, that hath the honour to have the Sovereign Majesty of the World for his especial friend? How can he be miserable who enjoyeth the fountain of all happiness, who hath the light of God's countenance to cheer him, who hath the consolations of God's holy Spirit to refresh and revive him? What can he want, who, beside his present interest in all the needful effects of God's bountiful love, is an Heir of Heaven and everlasting bliss? Seeing therefore it is in our power to be religious, seeing we may, if we will (God's Grace concurring, which preventeth us to seek, which never is withheld from those who seek it) be good Christians; seeing nothing can hinder us from fearing God, or can separate us from his love, neither can any thing render our condition bad or unhappy, really distressed or needy: O fear the Lord (saith the Psalmist) for there is no want to them that seek him: The young Lions (or the rich, as the LXX render it) do lack and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing; and, Whoso keepeth the commandment, shall feel no evil thing, saith the Wiseman; and, The hand of our God is upon all them that seek him, saith the Prophet; and, Who is he that shall harm you, (or do ill to you, or make you worse) if ye be followers of that which is good? saith St Peter; and, We know (saith St. Paul) that to them who love God, all things cooperate for good; and, Godliness (saith he again) with contentedness is great gain; that is, supposing we have the goods which piety ministreth, although we have nothing more, we are, if we can be content, very well to pass; it is abundantly sufficient for us.

Job, who ἐξή-  
νωσεν αὐτὸν  
(τὸ διαβόλην)  
ἐξελθὲν ἐκ  
ἀπασαν καλὰ  
τὸ ἐδιδούθη  
ἐν αὐτῷ. Ὁ  
Chryl. ad  
Olymp. 2

Prov. 15. 15.

Psal. 73. 26.  
16. 5. 119.  
57. 142. 5.

Rom. 8. 39.

Psal. 34. 9.

Πλάστοι ἐπὶ  
τὸν δόσαν.

LXX.

Ecclef. 8. 5.

Ezra 8. 22.

1 Pet. 3. 13.

Ὁ κακῶσαν.

Rom. 8. 28.

1 Tim. 6. 6.



Why then, I pray, are we discontent? What do we groan or grieve for? what is it that we do want? Is it the use of reason, is it virtue, is it God's favour? then indeed we have good cause to be displeased; for the want of those things is indeed lamentable; but if we do want them, it is only our selves that we should complain of; for we may have them if we will, and who can help it if we will not? Who, if we shall wilfully deprive our selves of them, will be concerned to mind our complaints? But is it only a lump of trash, or a puff of honour, or a flash of pleasure, that we do need? Is it that we cannot so delicately glut our bellies, or so finely cloath our backs, or so thoroughly sooth our fancies, as we could wish, that we so pitifully moan? Is it being restrained in some respects from the swinge of our humour, it is that we are not so much regarded, or are slighted by some persons, it is that we are crossed in some design, that so discomposeth and discourageth us? then are we fottishly fond and childish in our conceits, and our affections: for proper it is to children, when as they want no solid or substantial goods, to wail for worthless toys or trinkets; 'tis for children, when they have not their will in petty and impertinent matters, to cry and lament; children are much affected with every Word, or little shew that crosseth them: If we were (as St. Paul chargeth us to be) *perfect men*, if we had manly judgments, and manly affections toward things, we should not so regard or value any of these temporal and transitory things, either good or evil, as by the want of one sort, or by the presence of the other, to be much disturbed; we should, with St. Paul, style any present evil *τὸ ἐλαφρὸν καὶ θλίψις*, a *lightness of affliction*: We should with him reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glories which shall be revealed to us: We should with St. Peter greatly rejoyce, though for a season we are in heaviness, through manifold trials, or afflictions: We should esteem any condition here very tolerable, yea very good.

1 Cor. 14. 20.

2 Cor. 4. 17.  
Rom. 8. 28.

1 Pet. 1. 6.

4. In truth (if we will not mince the matter, and can bear a truth sounding like a Paradox) usually our condition is then better, when it seemeth worse; then we have most cause to be glad when we are aptest to grieve; then we should be thankful, when we do complain; that it appeareth otherwise to us, it is because in our taxations of things we do ordinarily judge (or rather not judge, but fancy, not hearing or regarding any dictate of reason) like beasts; prizing things merely according to present sense, or shew, not examining their intrinick natures, or looking forward into their proper fruits and consequences.

Adversity (or a state, wherein we are not furnished with all accommodations grateful to sense or fancy; or wherein somewhat doth cleave to us offensive to those inferiour powers of soul) is the thing which we chiefly loath and abominate; whereas, in true judgment, nothing commonly is more necessary, more wholesome, more useful and beneficial to us; nothing is more needful, or conducive to the health of our soul, and to our real happiness, than it: It is the School of Wisdom, wherein our minds are disciplined and improved in

— *multaque in rebus acerbis  
Acritus advertunt animos ad religio-  
nem.* Lucret. 3. p. 64.  
Καὶ ὅτ' τὴν οὐρανὸν ἀπαυγάζει, καὶ τὴν γῆν  
μίαν ἐκκόπτει πᾶσαν ἢ θλίψις, καὶ πρὸς  
ὑπομονὴν ἀλείφει καὶ καθαλύπει καὶ ἀν-  
δραπίνων πρᾶγματων τὴν ἀρετήν,  
καὶ πολλὰ ἐσάγει τὴν φιλοσοφίαν, &c.  
Chry. in 2 Cor. Orat. 26.

\* Psal. 119. the knowledge of the best things, whence it is termed *παιδεία*, that is, in-  
71. structive chastisement; \* so David found it, *It is*, said he, *good for me that I*  
1 Cor. 11. 32. *have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes*; and, our Lord himself,  
Κεῖνός μοι ἐμαυτὸν ἀπ' ὧν ἐπάδεις, *He learned obedience from what he suffered*. It is the *Aca-*  
παιδεύομεθα.  
Heb. 5. 8. *demy* wherein virtue is acquired and exercised; so God meant it to his peo-  
ple; *The Lord thy God* (saith Moses) *led thee this forty years*  
*in the wilderness, that he might humble thee, and prove*  
*thee*. So the *Wiseman* saith, that by the sadness of the coun-  
*tenance the heart is made better*; and, *that stripes do cleanse*  
*the inward parts of the belly*. And, *It yieldeth*, (saith the  
*Apostle*) *the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are*  
*exercised thereby*.

*Miraris tu si Deus, ille bonorum a-  
mantissimus, qui illos quam optimos esse  
atque excellentissimos vult, fortunam illis  
cum qua exercentur assignat?* Sen. de  
Prov. 2.  
Deut. 8. 2.  
Ecclef. 7. 3. Prov. 20. 30. Heb. 12.  
11. Jam. 1. 3. Rom. 5. 33.

Job. 23. 10. (Psal. 66. 10.)  
Ecclef. 2. 5. Sap. 3. 5.  
(Isa. 1. 25. 48. 10. Mal. 3. 23.)  
Dan. 11. 35.  
\* Hence *πειρασμός* (trial) is the  
usual word signifying it. 1 Pet. 1. 6, &c.

It is the furnace of the Soul wherein it is tried; cleaned and refined from the dross of vain conceits, of perverse humours, of vicious distempers: *When* (saith Job) *he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold*: and, *Gold* (saith the *Wise-man*) *is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of \* adversity*.

It



It is the method whereby God reclaimeth sturdy sinners to goodness, engageth them to seek and serve himself; so of the *Israelites*, the Prophet saith, *Isa. 26. 16. Lord in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them; so Manasses, when he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his Fathers; so Nebuchadnezzar, after being driven from his Kingdom, his understanding returned unto him, and he blessed the most high, and praised and honoured him that liveth for ever. So David himself, Before, said he, I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word.*

It is that whereby God doth prepare men, and doth entitle them to the blessed rewards hereafter: *Our light affliction* (saith *St. Paul*) *which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; and, Ye* (saith *St. Peter*) *greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.* Such is the nature, such the use, such the fruits of adversity.

It is indeed scarce possible, that without tasting it somewhat deeply, any man should become in good measure either wise or good. He must be very ignorant of himself (of his own temper and inclinations, of the strength and forces of his reason) who hath not met with some rub and crosses to try himself and them with: the greater part of things he must little understand, who hath not experienced the worst part: he cannot skill to wield and govern his passions, who never had them stirred up, and tossed about by cross accidents: he can be no good Pilot in matters of humane life, who hath not for some time sailed in a rough Sea, in foul Weather, among sands and shelves: he could have no good opportunity of employing thoroughly, or improving his wit, his courage, his industry, who hath had no straits to extricate himself from, no difficulties to surmount, no hardships to sustain: The virtues of humility, of patience, of contentedness necessarily must be unknown to him, to whom no disgraces, no wants, no sore pains have arrived, by well enduring which, those virtues are learnt, and planted in the Soul: Scarce can he become very charitable, or compassionate to others, who never himself hath felt the smart of affliction, or inconveniences of any distress; for even, as the *Apostle* teacheth us, our Saviour himself was obliged to suffer tribulation, that he thence might become merciful, and disposed to succour the afflicted. (No wonder, if he that liveth in continual prosperity, be a Nabal, churlish and discourteous, insensible of other mens grievances.) And how can he express much piety or love to God, who is not (in submission to God's Will, and for his sake) put to suffer any thing grievous, or want any thing desirable? When can he employ any great faith or hope in God, who never hath any visible need of succour, or relief from him, who hath other present aids to confide in? How can he purely delight in God, and place his sole felicity in him? How can he thoroughly relish spiritual things, whose affections are taken up by an affluence of other goods, whose appetites are glutted with enjoyment of other delights? What but deprivation of these things can lay open the vanity, the deceitfulness and slipperiness of them? What but crosses and disappointments here can withdraw our minds from a fond admiration, and eager affection towards this World? What but the want of these joys and satisfactions, can drive us to seek our felicity elsewhere? when the deceit of riches possesseth us, How can we judge right of things? when cares about them distract us, How can we think about any thing that is good? when their snares entangle us, and their clogs encumber us, How can we be free and expedite in doing good? when abundance fatneth our hearts, and ease softneth our spirits, and success puffeth up

Ἡ δὲ πόνων ἐπίταξις, μὴδ' ἐπὶ ταῖς ἐξῆς, καὶ ἐρεῖσμα ἀσφαλὲς πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐκδύνασθαι. καὶ περὶ τὴν κατὰ φύσιν, καὶ παρὰ φύσιν ἀπορίας, καὶ φρονιμωτέρως ποιεῖν καὶ διαλαβετέρας ἐργάζεσθαι. *Chr. Chryl. tom. 6. Or. 9.*

*2 Cor. 4. 17.*  
*Heb. 10. 36. ἡσυχίας ἔχετε καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἐλπίδα.*  
*1 Pet. 1. 6. 4. 14.*

*Nihil infelicitas eo, cui nihil unquam evenit adversi, non licuit enim illi se experiri.*  
*Sen. de Provid. 3.*  
*Non fert ullum idum illa salicitas.*  
*Ibid.*

*Qua laet, inque bonis cessat non cognita rebus.*  
*Apparet virtus, arguiturque malis.*  
*Ovid. Trist. 4. 3.*

*Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.*  
*Ae. 1. 2.*

*Heb. 2. 17, 18.*  
*4. 15, 16.*  
*1 Sam. 25.*  
*6. 3.*

*Cum molestia in hujus vita fragilitate crebrescunt, aeternam requiem nos desiderare compellunt. Mundus quippe iste periculosus est blandus, quam molestus, & magis cavendus quam se illiciti diligi, quam cum admonet, cogitque contemni.*  
*Aug. Ep. 144.*

*Ardua nam res est opibus non trahere moras.*  
*Marr.*  
*Munera ista fortuna putatis? insidia sunt.*  
*Sen. Ep. 8.*  
*Viscera beneficia.*  
*Ib.*

*Matt. 13. 22.*  
*1 Tim. 6. 9.*  
*Luc. 10. 41.*  
*Deut. 32. 15.*  
*Prov. 1. 32.*  
*30. 9.*



Hol. 13. 6. our minds; when pride, sensuality, stupidity and sloth (the most inseparable  
Psal. 30. 6. adherents to large and prosperous Estates) do continually insinuate themselves  
Jer. 22. 21. into us, what Wisdom, what Virtue are we like to have?  
Amos 6. 1. &c.

*Gratulari & gaudere nos docet dignatione divina castigationis — O servum illum beatum, cuius emendationi Dominus instat; cui dignatur irasci, quam admonendi dissimulatione non decipit. Tert. de Pat. 11.*

*Ο αμαρτάνων καὶ μὴ κολεῖται, πάντων ἔστιν ἀδελιώτερος, &c. Chrys. ἀνδρ. 5.*

tained under the reign of folly and mischief, that we are not inevitably made

*\*Η νοσούντων ἰατροὶ αἱ ὑγιαίνοντων γυμνασίαι. Simpl.  
Κρίσις τῶν διημελείας ἀγαθῶν τε καὶ φιλοσοφῶν. Naz. Ep. 66.*

as if we should complain of the hand which draweth us from a precipice, or

*Jude 23.  
Beneficia multa tristitia & asperam frontem habent, quemadmodum urere, & secare, ut sanes. Sen. de Benef. 5. 20.*

*Horrorem operis fructus excusat. Tert. Scorp. 5.*

*Luke 6. 24. Jam. 5. 1. Amos 6. 1, &c.*

Let our condition be what it will, we are the same. It doth not change us in our intrinsic worth, or state. It is but as a garment about us, or as weather.

*— Ego utrum.  
Navis ferat magnā an parvā, ferat vinus & idem. Hor. Epist. 2. 3.*

him: And what we may rejoyce in, when past, why should we not bear contentedly when present? Why should not the expectation of such good fruits satisfy us?

Why should not such a condition, being so plainly better in it self, seem also better unto us? We cannot, if we are reasonable, but approve it in our judgment; Why then are we not fully reconciled unto it in our affection?

## S E R M O N VIII.

### Of CONTENTMENT.

P H I L. iv. 11.

*I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.*

**B**UT farther; Let our state be, as to quality, what it will, good or bad, joyful or unpleasant, we may yet consider, that it cannot be desperate, it may not be lasting; for there is not any necessary connexion between the present and the future; wherefore, as the present being momentary



mentary and transient, can little trouble us, so the future being unknown, and uncertain, should not dismay us. As no man reasonably can be elevated with confidence in a good state, presuming on its duration, (*Boast not thy self of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth;*)

so no man should be dejected for a bad one, in suspicion that it will abide long; seeing neither (considering the frequent vicissitudes that occur, and the flux nature of all things here) is each of them in it self, stable; and the continuance of each absolutely dependeth on God's arbitrary disposal; and as God often doth overturn prosperity, to humane judgment most firmly grounded, so he most easily can redress the (to appearance) most forlorn adversity; and he, being especially the helper of the helpless, doth frequently perform it: As he poureth contempt upon Princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty; so he raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill: He casteth down the mighty from their seat, and exalteth the humble and meek: He sendeth the rich empty away, and filleth the hungry with good things. He maketh sore, and bindeth up, he woundeth, and

*Multa interveniunt quibus vicinum periculum vel prope admodum aut subsistat, aut desinat, aut in alium caput transibit, Sen.*

*Psal. 72. 12. 107. 9. 10. 4. 108. 9.*

*Job. 12. 21. Psal. 107. 40.*

*Isa. 25. 5. Job 5. 11.*

*Isa. 2. 11. Psal. 18. 27.*

*Psal. 113. 7. 107. 41.*

*Job 5. 18.*

*1 Sam. 2. 7.*

Considering therefore the reason of things, and the nature of God, if our state be at present bad or sorrowful, we have more reason to hope for its amendment, than to fear its continuance. If indeed things went on in a fatal track, merely according to a blind and heedless chance, or a stiff and unalterable necessity; if there were no remedy from God's providence, or support by his grace to be expected (although even then there would be no reason to grieve or complain; grief would be unreasonable because unprofitable, complaint would be vain, because fortune and fate are deaf) yet our infirmity might somewhat excuse that idle proceeding; but since not a Sparrow falleth to the ground, not a hair of our head perisheth; nothing at all passeth otherwise, than by the voluntary disposition of a most wise and gracious God; since he doth always strictly view, and is very sensible of our griefs; yea, doth in a manner sympathize with them (according to those pathetic expressions in the Prophets; *His bows are found, and are troubled, his heart is turned within him; In all their afflictions he was afflicted.*) Since he farther hath by promise obliged himself to care for us, to support, and succour us; we have all reason to hope, yea firmly to believe (if at least we can find in our hearts to hope and to believe) that we shall, as soon as it is good and expedient for us, find relief and ease; we shall have that *δικαιωσις*, that *βοήθεια*, that *seasonable succour*, of which the Apostle to the Hebrews speaketh.

*Τοις γὰρ ἐν ἐχθρῇ καὶ σφόδρῃ λογισμῷ κεχηρημένοις ἡδὲν ἐπὶ ἀνδραπύγων ἀδελφότητος ἡδὲν ὁ ἑαυτῶν σάδεσθαι ἢ βέλαιον*  
*Gr. Theod. Ep. 14.*

*Sperat adversis, metuit secundis.*  
*Alteram sortem bene preparatum petunt*  
*Hor. Carm. 2. 10.*

*Matt. 10. 29.*

*30.*

*Luke 21. 18.*

*Hos. 11. 8.*

*Jer. 31. 20.*

*Isa. 63. 9. 15.*

*Luc. 12. 29. 31.*

*Heb. 13. 5.*

*Matt. 6. 33.*

*Phil. 4. 6.*

*1 Pet. 5. 7.*

*Psal. 55. 23.*

*37. 5.*

*Heb. 4. 6.*

*Job. 5. 16.*

Hope lieth at the bottom of the worst condition that can be; The poor (saith Job's friend) hath hope; and the rich can have no more; the future being equally close to both; the one can have no greater assurance to keep what he hath, than the other hath to get what he needeth; yea clearly the poor hath the advantage in the case; for God hath more declared, that he will relieve the poor man's want, than that he will preserve the rich man's store: If then we have in every condition a hope present to us, Why do we grieve as those who have no hope? having ever ready the best anchor that can be to rest upon (for in this rolling Sea of humane affairs, there is no firmer anchor than hope) Why do we let our minds be tossed with discontentful sollicitudes and fears? Why do we not rather (as the Apostle injoineth) rejoice in hope, than grieve out of despair? Why do we not as the Prophet adviseth, *hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord?* the effect of so reposing our selves for the future on God's Providence would be perfect content, and peace, according to that of the Prophet, *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed in thee, because he trusteth in thee:* And that of the wise Man, *A patient man will bear for a time, and afterwards joy shall spring up unto him.*

*1 Thess. 4. 13.*

*Heb. 6. 19.*

*Rom. 12. 12.*

*Lam. 3. 26.*

*Isa. 26. 3.*

*Eccl. 1. 23.*

The truth is, and it seemeth very observable, in order to our purpose, that most discontent ariseth not from the sense of incumbent evil, but from suspicion, or fear of somewhat to come: Although God at present dispenseth a competency of food and rayment, although we are in a tolerable condition,

and



and feel no extremity of want or pain, yet not defcrying the way of a future provision for us, answerable to our desires, we do trouble our selves; which demeanour implyeth great ignorance and infidelity; We think God obliged in kindness, not only to bestow upon us what is needful in its season, but to furnish us with stores, and allow us securities; we must have somewhat in hand, or we cannot trust him for the future; this is that which our

Πολλὰς μικροφυχίας ἐστὶν ὑπὲρ τῶν  
ὑστερον συμπροσπομένων, ἢ μὲν δὲ ὅλως συμ-  
προσπομένων τῶν ἀδύνατον ἢ δὲ καρπύδης  
ἢ ἀπὸ τῆς Chryl. ad singul. 2.

Saviour cautioneth against, as the root of discontent and sign of diffidence; Matt. 6. 34. *Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of it self, sufficient to the day is the evil thereof.* An advice

Calamitosus est animus futuri anxius, &  
ante miseriam miser.

Ne sis miser ante tempus, cum illa qua  
imminetia expavisti, fortasse nunquam ven-  
tura sint, certe nonnumquam venerint, Gr. S. n.  
Ep. 13.

Quod juvat dolori suo occurrere? satis  
cito dolebis cum venerit. Ibid.

Quoties incerta erunt maria, tibi fave. lb.

no less pious, than manifestly full of Reason and Wisdom: For what a palpable folly is it to anticipate that evil which we would avoid; then, when we earnestly desire to put off sorrow, to pull it toward us; to feel that mischief which possibly shall never be; to give it a being in our fancy, which it may never have in nature? Could we follow this advice, never resenting evils before they come, never prejudg-

ing about future events against God's Providence, and our own quiet; constantly depending on the divine care for us; not taking false alarms, and trembling at things, which shall never come near us; not being disturbed with panick fears, no discontent could ever seize upon us; for the present is ever supportable; our mind cannot be overwhelmed by the pangs of a transitory moment.

If we need farther encouragement for application of this remedy, we have manifold experiments to assure its vertue: as there are innumerable Promises, that none who hope in God shall be disappointed, so there are many illustrious examples of those, whom God hath in remarkable manner, and wonderful measure relieved from wants and distresses, raising them out of deepest poverty, contempt and worldly wretchedness, into most eminent degrees of Wealth and Prosperity: Look (saith the Hebrew Sage) into the ancient generations, and see; Who hath trusted in the Lord, and hath been ashamed? Or who hath abided in his fear, and hath been forsaken? Or who hath invoked him, and he did overlook (or despise) him? If we look into those generations, we may there find Joseph out of slavery, and out of prison, advanced to be the chief Governour of a most flourishing Kingdom; Moses from an exile, and a vagrant, made the Redeemer and Commander of a populous Nation: Job out of extream poverty and disgrace, restored to be in wealth and honour twice greater than the greatest men of the East: Daniel out of captivity and persecution, become President of the greatest Monarchy on earth: David raised out of great meanness to highest dignity, restored out of extream straits into a most prosperous state; according to those Words of admiration and acknowledgement; O what great troubles and adversities hast thou shewed me, and yet didst thou turn and refresh me, yea and broughtest me from the deep of the earth again: Thou hast brought me to great honour, and comforted me on every side: Thus hath God eminently done with divers, thus we may be assured that he will do competently with us, if with the like faith and patience, we do, as they did, rely and wait upon him.

Lam. 3. 25.  
Isa. 30. 18. 40.  
31. 49. 23.  
Psal. 25. 3.  
37. 9. 10.  
2 Chron. 28. 9.  
Ezra 8. 22.  
Amos 5. 4.  
2 Chron. 15. 2.  
Eccl. 2. 10.

Job. 42. 10.  
1. 3.

Psal. 71. 18.  
69. 29. 18. 36.

6. But farther, imagine or suppose, that our condition (so irksome to us at present) will certainly hold on to the utmost; yet consider also, that it soon will cease, and change of it self; since we are mortal, our evils cannot be perpetual, we cannot long be infested with them.

As it may debase, and embitter all the prosperity in the World, to consider, that it is very fading and short-lived, that its splendour is but a blaze, its pleasure but a flash, its joy but as the crackling of thorns; so it should abate and sweeten any adversity, to remember, that it is passing away, and suddenly will be gone. Put, I say, the worst case that can be, that it were certainly determined,

Eccl. 7. 6.  
(Psal. 27. 13.) I had fainted, if I had  
not believed to see the goodness of the Lord  
in the land of the living.

and we did as certainly know it, that those things which cause our displeasure, should continue through our whole life; yet since our life it self will soon be spun out, and with it all our worldly evils will vanish, Why are we troubled? What is said of our selves must in consequence be truly applied to them;

They



They flee like a shadow, and continue not; they are winds passing and coming not again; they are vapours appearing for a little time, and then vanishing away; they wither like grass, and fade away as a leaf; they may die before us, they cannot out-live us; our life is but a hand breadth; And can then our evils have any vast bulk? Our age is as nothing; And can any crosses therein be then any great matter? How can any thing so very short be very intolerable? It is but *ὁλίσθη ἀπὸ δυνάμεως*, being (as St. Peter speaketh) a little while yet aggrieved; it is but *μικρὸν ὅσον χρόνον*, a small quantity whatever it be of time; as the Apostle to the Hebrews saith, that we need patience, it is but *τὸ παροῦν*, a present moment; and therefore as St. Paul intimateth, light and inconsiderable that we are to undergo. We have but a very narrow strait of time to pass over, but we shall land on the firm, and vast continent of eternity; when we shall be freed from all the troublesome agitations, from all the perilous storms, from all the nauseous qualms of this navigation; death (which may be very near, which cannot be far off) is a sure haven from all the tempests of life, a safe refuge from all the persecutions of the World, an infallible medicine of all the diseases of the mind, and of our state: it will enlarge us from all restraints, it will discharge all our debts, it will ease us from all our toils, it will stifle all our cares, it will veil all our disgraces; it will still all our complaints, and bury all our disquiets; it will wipe all tears from our eyes, and banish all sorrow from our hearts: it perfectly will level all conditions, setting the high and low, the rich and poor, the wise and ignorant all together upon even ground; smothering all the pomp and glories; swallowing all the Wealth and Treasures of the World.

It is therefore but holding out a while, and all our molestation, of its own accord, will expire: time certainly will cure us; but it is better that we should owe that benefit to reason, and let it presently comfort us: It is better by rational consideration, to work content in our selves, using the brevity and frailty of our life as an argument to sustain us in our adversity, than only to find the end thereof as a natural and necessary means of evasion from it.

Serious reflection upon our mortality, is indeed, upon many accounts a powerful antidote against discontent; being apt to extirpate the most radical causes thereof.

Is it because we much admire these worldly things, that we so much grieve for the want of them? this will quell that admiration; For how can we admire them if we consider, how in regard to us they are so very transitory, and evanid? How can we deem them much worth the having, when we can for so little time enjoy them, must so very soon quite part from them?

How can we dote on the World, seeing *The World* (as St. John saith) *passeth away, and the desire thereof?*

How can we value any Worldly glory, since *All the glory of men is* (as St. Peter telleth us) *as the flower of the grass*; since, (as the Psalmist saith) *Man in honour abideth not, but is like the beasts that perish?*

How can we set our heart on riches considering that *Riches are not for ever*, nor can (as the wise Man saith) *deliver from death*; that as St. James admonisheth, *The rich man fadeth in his ways*; that it may be said to any rich man, as it was to him in the Gospel; *Thou fool, this night thy life shall be required of thee, and what thou hast prepared to whom shall it fall?* How can we fantasie pleasure, seeing it is but *πρόκαιρος ἀπόλαυσις*, a very temporary fruition; seeing however we do eat, or drink, or play, it followeth, the *morrow we shall die*.

How can we even admire any secular Wisdom, and Knowledge, seeing that it is (as the Psalmist telleth us) true of every man, that — *his breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish*; particularly it is seen that *wise Men die*, no otherwise then as the foolish, and brutish person perisheth; that, as Solomon with regret observed, *There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither we are going*.

Do we admire the condition of those, who, upon the stage, do appear in the state of Kings, do act the part of wealthy men, do talk gravely and wisely like

1 Cron. 29.

15.

Psal. 78. 39.

Jam. 4. 14.

Psal. 90. 5.

Isa. 64. 6. 40.

6.

Psal. 39. 5.

Omnia brevia

et transitoria esse

dicitur etiam

magna. Cic.

Lael.

1 Pet. 1. 6.

Heb. 10. 26.

27.

2 Cor. 4. 17.

Ἰσος χρόνος ἀπασί, πένθος τε καὶ βλάβη.

σικεῖται.

Πάντες ἴσοι νέκυντες. Phocyl.

Κρήτιον —

Ὅ μὲλλεις πρὸ χρόνου χαλίζειν, τὸ τοῦτο χαλίζειν πρὸ λόγου. Plut. ad Apoll.

1 John 2. 27.

1 Cor. 7. 31.

Eccles. 1. 3. 6.

1 Pet. 2. 24.

Psal. 49. 12.

82. 6.

Prov. 27. 24.

11. 4.

Jam. 1. 11.

Heb. 11. 25.

1 Cor. 15. 32.

Psal. 46. 4.

Psal. 49. 10.

Eccles. 9. 10.

2. 14.



like Judges or Philosophers for an hour or two? If we do not admire those shadows and mockeries of state, Why do we admire any appearances upon this Theatre of the World, which are scarce a whit less deceitful, or more durable than they?

Is it an envious or disdainful regret at the advantages of others before us (of others perhaps that are unworthy and unfit; or that are, as we conceit, no more worthy and capable than our selves) that gnaweth our heart; is it, that such persons are more wealthy, more honourable, in greater favour or repute than we, that vexeth us? the consideration how little time those slender preeminences will last, may (if better remedies want due efficacy) serve toward rooting out that disease; the Psalmist doth several times prescribe it; *Fret not thyself* (saith he) *against evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity, for they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb; and again, Be not afraid when one is made rich, and when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dyeth he shall carry nothing away, his glory shall not descend after him: and he being fallen into this scurvy distemper, did follow his own prescription, I was* (saith he) *envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked—until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end; surely thou didst set them in slippery places—How are they brought into desolation as in a moment?* So likewise doth Solomon prescribe: *Let not* (saith he) *thy heart envy sinners; Why not? because surely there is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off: there will be a close of his undeserved prosperity, and a good success to thy well-grounded hope. So whatever doth breed discontent, the reflection upon our mortal and frail state will be apt to remove it.*

It was that which comforted Job, and fortified his patience under so grievous pressures; *All the days of my appointed time* (said he) *I will wait till my change come: He would not be weary while he lived of his afflictions, because the days of man are few, and full of trouble: If they are full of trouble, and that be a fading consideration; yet they are few, and that maketh amends, that is comfortable.*

7. I add, that it is somewhat consolatory to consider, that the worse our condition is here, the better we may hope our future state will be; the more trouble and sorrow we endure, the less of worldly satisfaction we enjoy here, the less punishment we have to fear, the more comfort we may hope to find hereafter; for as it is a woful thing to have received *our portion*, to have enjoyed *our consolation in this life*, so 'tis a happy thing to have undergone our pain here. A Purgatory under-ground is probably a fable; but a Purgatory upon earth hath good foundations. God is wont so to order it, that all men, that especially good men, shall undergo it: for, *What Son is there whom the Father doth not chasten? All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution.*

8. A like consolation it is to consider, that Wealth and Prosperity are great Talents, for the improvement of which we must render a strict account, so that *to whom much is given, from him much shall be required*; so that they are in effect a burthen; from which poverty includes an exemption; for the less we have, the less we have to do, the less we are responsible for; our burthen is smaller, our account will be more easie.

9. I shall in reference to our condition, and the nature of those things which cause our discontent, but propose one consideration more, or ask one question: What is it that we do want, or wait for? Is it any good we want, which by our care and industry we can procure? Is it any evil that afflicteth us, which by the like means we can evade? If it be so, Why then do we not vigorously apply our selves to the business; why do we not instead of idle vexation, and ineffectual complaints, use the means offered for our relief? Do we like and love trouble? let us then be content to bear it; let us hug it and keep it close; if not, let us employ the forces afforded us by nature, and by occasion, to repel and remove it.

Τὸν μὴ δουλοῦν ἐπὶ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ  
δούλῳ ἢ ἡλπίδιον, ἔτι, δεσποχρῆστον  
ὡς μόνον οἱ οὐτοί, τοῖς δογμασίν τοῖς  
ἐαυτοῖς. Epict. 3. 24.

— Πόθεν φέρεται, μὴ δ' ἀγανακτεῖται,  
ἔτι δ' ἡγήσεται, καὶ δὲ δὲ δόνη.  
Aur. Carm.

But



But if we grieve and moan, because we cannot obtain some good above our reach, or not decline some unavoidable evil, what do we thereby but palpably express our folly, and wilfully heighten our Woe; adding voluntary displeasure to the heap of necessary want or pain; impressing more deeply on our selves the sense of them? in such a case patience is instead of a remedy, which though it do not thoroughly cure the malady, yet it somewhat allevieth it, preventing many bad symptoms, and allwaging the paroxysms thereof. What boots it to winse and kick against fortune? to do so will inflame us, and make us foam, but will not relieve or ease us? if we cannot get out of the net, or the cage, to flutter and flounce will do nothing but batter and bruise us.

— *Levis sit patientia*  
*Quicquid corrigere est nefas.* Hor.

*Animus aequus optimum est arumia*  
*condimentum.* Plaut. Rud.

ταῖς συμπίπτουσιν ἡμῖν δυνεῖς ἀλγύστες καὶ ἀθυμύστες ὁ μόνον ἰσορροπία καὶ ταύτης κατὰ μέτρον παραμυθία, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις τὸ δυνά. Chrys. Αὐδ. 3.

Οἱ δὲ τὸ πάθος δελεάζοντες ἑλθόντες καὶ κατὰ φύσιν ὁλοφύρομεθα, ἀνιπαῖς δὲ κρίνομεθα, καὶ παρὰ φύσιν ἑλθόντες καὶ ἡγροῦμεθα. Theod. Ep. 15.

But farther, to allay our discontents, let us consider the World, and general state of Men here.

I. Look first upon the World, as it is commonly managed and ordered by Men: Thou perhaps art displeased, that thou dost not prosper and thrive therein, that thou dost not share in the goods of it; that its accommodations and preferments are all snapt from thee; that thy pretences are not satisfied, and thy designs fail; this thou dost take to be somewhat hard, and unequal; and therefore art grieved. But if thou art wise, thou shouldst not wonder; if thou art good, thou shouldst not be vexed hereat: for thou hast not, perhaps, any capacity for this World; thy temper and disposition are not framed to suit with its way; thy principles and rules do clash with it, thy resolutions and designs do not well comport with prosperity here; thou canst not, or wilt not use the means needful to compass worldly ends: Thou perhaps hast a meek, quiet, modest, sincere, steady disposition; thou canst not be pragmatical and boisterous, eager and fierce, importunately troublesome, intolerably confident, unaccountably versatile and various: Thou hast certain pedantick notions about right and wrong, certain Romantick fancies about another World (unlike to this) which thou dost stiffly adhere to, and which have an influence upon thy actions: Thou hast a squeamish conscience, which cannot relish this, cannot digest that advantageous course of proceeding; a scrupulous humour, that hampereth thee, and curbeth thee from attempting many things which would serve thy purpose; thou hast a spice of silly generosity, which maketh divers profitable ways of acting (such as forging and feigning, supplanting others by detraction and calumny, soothing and flattering people) to be below thee, and unworthy of thee; Thou thinkest thy self obliged, and art peremptorily resolved to observe strict rules of justice, of humanity, of charity, to speak as thou meaneest, to do as thou wouldest be done to, to wrong no man any-wise, to consider and tender the case of other men as thine own; Thy designs are honest and moderate, conducive to (or at least consistent with) the publick good, injurious or hurtful to no man; Thou carriest on thy designs by fair ways, by a modest care, and harmless diligence; nor canst be drawn to use any other, how seemingly needful soever, which do favour of fraud, violence, any sort of wrong or baseness: Thou hast an honest pride and haughtiness of mind, which will not let thee condescend to use those sly tricks, crooked ways and shifts, which commonly are the compendious and most effectual ways of accomplishing designs here: Thou art, in fine, (like *Helvidius Priscus*) in thy dealings and proceedings, *pervicax recti*, wilfully and peevishly honest: Such an one perhaps art thou, and such is thy way. And canst thou hope to be any body, or get any thing here? Shall such a superstitious Fop, such a conscientious simpleton, such a bashful sneaksby, so phantastick a philosopher pretend to any thing here? No, thou art here *piscis in arido*, quite out of thy element; this World is not for thee to thrive in.

Τὸ τὸ ἡδὺς γαλιωθὲν τε καὶ ἀτεχνῶς  
καὶ περὶ τὰς πλείους ἐρεθιστὰς ἀγῶ-  
νιστῶν. Naz. Ep. 63.

This World is for Worldlings to possess and enjoy: *It was* (say the *Rab-*  
*bins*) *made for the presumptuous*; and although God did not altogether de-



sign it for them, yet men have almost made it so: They are best qualified to thrive in it, who can lustily baffle and scramble; who can fiercely swagger and huff; who can fawn; who can wind and wriggle like a Serpent; who can finely cog and gloze; who can neatly shuffle and juggle; who can shrewdly over-reach and undermine others; those slippery wily artists, who can veere any whither with any Wind; those men of impregnable confidence, who can

*Quod facillimum factu est, primum, & callidus bonus & modestus amicus.*  
Tac. Hist. 1.

insist upon any pretences; who can be indefatigably and irresistibly urgent, nor will be repulsed or baffled by any means; those who have a temper so lax and supple, that they can bend it to any compliance advantageous to them; who have a spirit so limber, that they can stretch it any whither; who have face

*Ἐφ' ἡλπίσιν ἑαυτοῦ ἀνεδίδου, οὐδ' αὖτις πάλιν πενίαν, πρὶν ἢ ἴσθαι, ὅτι, διὰ τὴν ἀλγίαν, ὅτι δυνάσθαι εἶμι.* El. 13. 39.

enough, and conscience little enough to do any thing; who have no certain principles, but such as will sort with their interests: no rules but such *Lesbian* and leaden ones, that easily may be accommodated to their purposes: whose de-

signs all tend to their own private advantage, without any regard to the publick, or to the good of others; who can use any means conducive to such designs, bogling at nothing, which serveth their purpose; nor caring what they say, be it true or false; what they do, be it right or wrong, so it seem profitable: this is called wisdom, prudence, dexterity, ability, knowledge of men, and of the world, and I know not what beside; in the *Scripture* the *wisdom of the world*, and of the flesh, craft, guile, deceit, *malice*, &c. For such Persons it is to flourish in this World; *Behold these* (saith the *Psalms*) *are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; and who increase in riches; they are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men; their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than heart could wish:* They it is who love the World, who seek it, who study and labour for it; Who spend all their time, and employ all their care about it; And is it not fit they should have it? Is it not a pity they should miss it? Is it not natural, that they *who sow to the flesh, should reap from the flesh*? Should not they who use the proper means obtain the end? Should not they arrive at the place, who proceed in the direct road thither?

*Psal. 73. 12.*  
5. 7.

*1 Joh. 2. 16.*

But for thee, who canst not find in thy heart to use the means, why dost thou hope to compass the end; or grieve for not attaining it? Why dost thou blend and jumble such inconsistencies together, as the eager desires of this, and hopes of another World? It becometh not such a gallant to whine and pule. If thou wilt be brave, be brave indeed; singly and thoroughly; be not a double-hearted mongrel; think not of satisfying thy mind, and driving on other interests together; of enjoying the conceit of being an honest man, with the design of being a rich or great man; of arriving to the happiness of the other World, and attaining prosperity in this? Wouldst thou enjoy both these? What conscience is there in that? Leave rather this World unto those, who are more fit for it, who seem better to deserve it, who venture so much, and take such pains for it; do not go to rob them of this slender reward; but with content see them to enjoy the fruits of their labour and hazard: Be thou satisfied with the consequences of thy virtuous resolutions and proceedings; if it be worth thy while to live innocently, modestly and conscientiously, do it, and be satisfied; spoil not thine expectations by repining at the want of those things, which thy circumstances render incompatible with them: Follow effectually the holy *Patriarchs* and *Apostles*, who, without regret, forsook all, and cheerfully went thither, whither conscience and duty called them; if thou art not willing to do so, Why dost thou pretend to the same principles, or hope for the like rewards? But leaving the consideration of the

*1 Cor. 10. 13.*  
*Πειρασμοὶ οὗτοι ὅτι βίβλος ἡ ἀνθρώπου ἐστὶν ὡς ἡ γῆ. Job 7. 1. Chryl. ad Stag. 2.*  
(p. 106.)

*Οὐ νομοθετοῦντες ἡλθομεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον, οὐδ' εἰς τὸν βίον, &c. Plut. ad Apollon.*

World as man hath made it; Consider that this World is not in its nature or design, a place of perfect ease and convenience, of pure delight and satisfaction: What is this World but a region of tumult and trouble; a Theatre of vanity and disasters; the Kingdom of care, of fear, of grief and pain; of satiety, of disappointment, of regret and repentance? We came not hither to do our Will, or enjoy our pleasure; we are not born to make Laws for our selves, or to pick our condition here: No, this World is a place of banishment from our first Country, and the original felicity we were designed to;

this



this life is a state of travel toward another *better Country* and seat of rest: and well it is; in such cases, (well it is, I say, for us as Exiles and Travellers) if we can find any tolerable accommodation, if we can make any hard shift; It should not be strange unto us, if in this our peregrination we do meet with rough passages, foul ways, hard lodging, scant of course fare; if we complain of such things, we do not surely consider where we are, whence we came, whither we are going; we forget that we are the Sons of *Adam*, the Heirs of sin and sorrow, who have forfeited our rest and joy upon earth; we consider not, how unavoidable the effects are of that fatal condemnation and curse which followed our first transgression; we mind not that the perfection and purity of the blessings we have lost is not to be found on this side the celestial Paradise. This World is purposely made somewhat unpleasant to us; lest we should over-much delight in it, be unwilling to part with it, with to set up our rest here, and say, *Bonum est esse hic; It is good for us to be here.*

This life is a state of probation and exercise, like to that (which prefigured and represented it) of God's People in the Wilderness; wherein *God leadeth us* through many difficulties and hazards, in many wants and hardships, to *humble and prove us*, in order to the fitting us for another more happy state.

*No temptation therefore* (or affliction) *can seize upon us, but such as is humane*; that is, such as is natural and proper to men; 'tis the consideration, which St. Paul useth to comfort and support us in troubles; and a plainly good one it is, for seeing *Man* (as *Eliphaz* saith) *is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward*; that nothing is more natural to any thing, than trouble is to us; if we are displeased therewith, we are in effect displeased that we are men; it implyeth that we gladly would put off our nature, and cease to be our selves; we grieve that we are come to live in this World, and as well might we be vexed that we are not Angels; or that we are not yet in Heaven, which is the only place exempt from inconveniences and troubles, where alone *there is no sorrow, no clamour, no pain.*

It hath always been, and it will ever be an universal complaint and lamentation, that the life of man and trouble are individual companions, continually and closely sticking one to the other; that life and misery are but several names of the same thing; that our state here is nothing else, but a combination of various evils (made up of cares, of labours, of dangers, of disappointments, of discords, of disquiets, of diseases, of manifold pains and sorrows) that all ages, from wailing infancy to querulous decrepitness, and all conditions, from the careful Sceptre to the painful spade, are fraught with many great inconveniences peculiar to each of them; that all the face of the Earth is overspread with mischiefs as with a general and perpetual deluge; that nothing perfectly found, nothing safe, nothing stable, nothing serene is here to be found; this with one sad voice all mankind re-foundeth; this our *Poets* are ever moanfully singing, this our *Philosophers* do gravely inculcate; this the experience of all times loudly proclaimeth: For what are all Histories but continual registers of the evils incident to men; what do they all describe, but wars and slaughters, mutinies and seditions, tumults and confusions, devastations and ruins? What do they tell us, but of men furiously striving together, circumventing, spoiling, destroying one another? What do we daily hear reported, but cruel broils, bloody battles, and tragical events; great numbers of men slain, wounded, hurried into captivity; Cities sacked and razed, Countries harassed and depopulated; Kingdoms and Commonwealths overturned? What do we see before us but men carking, toiling, bickering; some worn out with labour, some pining away for want, some groaning under pain? And amidst so

Διδόντες ἡμῶν τὸν βίον κατεσκευάσεν, ἵνα ὑπο-βιβάσῃτε συνδυάσασθαι τὰς θλίψε-  
ας, ἐπιδυμίας καὶ πολλῶν λυγρῶν, εἰς τὸ νῦν, &c. Chrys. ἀνδρ. 5.

Deut. 8. 23.  
Λογίζεσθε, ὅτι ὁ κύριός ἐστις ὁ θεὸς ὁμοθυμαδὸν  
καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν τῇ ἐρήνῃ καὶ τῇ ἀσφάλειᾳ τῶν αἰ-  
ώνων, καὶ ὁ κύριός ἐστις ὁ θεὸς ὁμοθυμαδὸν  
καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν τῇ ἐρήνῃ καὶ τῇ ἀσφάλειᾳ τῶν αἰ-  
ώνων. Chrys. ad Rom. 2.

Πειρασμοὶ ὑμῶν ἐκ ἀλλοτρίων εἰς μὴ  
ἀνδραπνῆς. 1 Cor. 10. 3.

Ecclus. 40. 1. Ἀχολία ἐκτίσας  
παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ, &c.

Job. 5. 7.

Vid. Max. Tyr. diff. 25. p. 244.

It was the doom of man to eat his  
bread in sorrow all the days of his life.  
Gen. 3. 17.

Eccl. 1. 14. All is vanity and vexation  
of spirit.

Apo. 21. 4.

Ὁ βίος ἀνθρώπου ἐστὶν, ἀλλὰ ζυμὴ  
φθορᾶς. B. ὅς ἐστιν ὁ κύριός ἐστις ὁ θεὸς ὁμοθυμαδὸν  
καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν τῇ ἐρήνῃ καὶ τῇ ἀσφάλειᾳ τῶν αἰ-  
ώνων. Eurip.

Quid est diu vivere, nisi diu torqueri?  
Aug.

Πλεῖν μὲν γὰρ  
καὶ κακῶν,  
πλεῖν δὲ κα-  
λῶν. Hesiod.



*Ferre, quam sortem patientur omnes,  
Nemo recuset. Sen. Troad.  
Idem mihi videtur rerum natura, quod  
gravissimum fecit, commune fecisse, ut cru-  
delitatem fari consolaretur equalitas. Sen.  
ad Polyb. 21.*

Jer. 45. 4. 5.

*saith thus, Behold, that which I have built, I will break down; and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land. And seekest thou great things for thy self? seek them not; for behold I will bring evil on all flesh.*

4. Again, if we more closely and particularly survey the states of other men (of our brethren every-where, of our neighbours all about us) and compare our case with theirs, our condition hardly can appear to us so bad, but that we have many comforts and associates therein; many as ill, many far worse be- stead than our selves. How many of our Brethren in the World may we ob- serve conflicting with extream penury and distress; how many undergoing con- tinual hard drudgeries to maintain their lives; how many sorely pinched with hunger and cold; how many tortured with grievous sickness; how many op- pressed with debt; how many shut up under close restraint; how many detain- ed in horrible slavery; how many by the wasting rage of War rifled of their goods, driven from their homes, dispossessed of all comfortable subsistence? How many, in fine, passing their lives in all the inconveniences of rude, beg- garly, fordid and savage barbarism? And who of us have, in any measure, ta- sted of these, or of the like calamities? Yet are these Sufferers, all of them, the same in nature, with us; many of them, (as reason, as humility, as charity do oblige us to believe) deserve as well, divers of them much better than our selves: What reason then can we have to conceive our case so hard, or to complain thereof? Were we the only persons exposed to trouble, or the single marks of adverse for- tune; could we truly say with the Prophet, *Behold, if there be any sorrow like my sorrow*; we might seem a little unhappy: But since we have so much good

Lam. 1. 12.

*Nec rara videmus*

*Qua patoris; casus multis hic cognitus &*

*Tritus, & d medio fortuna ductus acerbo.*

Juv. Sat. 13. v. 8

*Te nunc delicias extra communia censes*

*Ponendum, &c. Juv. Sat. 13. v. 140.*

Jud. 6. 37.

Dan. 3. 25.

*to alledge, that we rather than others should be untouched by the grievances,*

*to which mankind is obnoxious? Whence may we pretend to be the special*

*favourites, mignons, privado's and darlings of fortune? Why may not God as*

*well deal with us, as he doth with other men; what grounds have we to chal-*

*lenge, or to expect that he should be partial toward us; why should we ima-*

*gine, that he must continually do miracles in our behalf, causing all those evils,*

*which fall upon our neighbours all about to skip over us, bedewing us, like*

*Gideon's fleece, with plenty and joy, while all the earth beside is dry; causing*

*us, like the three children, to walk in this wide furnace, unscorched and un-*

*singed by the flames encompassing us? Are we not men framed of the same*

*mould; are we not sinners guilty of like offences, with the meanest Peasant,*

*the poorest beggar, the most wretched slave (if so, then a parity of Fortune*

*with any men doth become us, and may be due to us; then it is a perverse and*

*unjust frowardness to be displeased with our lot) we may if we please, pity*

*the common state of men, but we cannot reasonably complain of our own;*

*doing so plainly doth argue, that we do unmeasurably overprize, and overlove*

*our selves. When once a great King did excessively and obstinately grieve*

*for the death of his Wife, whom he tenderly loved, a Philosopher observing*

*it, told him, "That he was ready to comfort him by restoring her to life,*

*"supposing only that he would supply what was needful toward the perform-*

*ing it;" The King said he was ready to furnish him with any thing: the*

*Philosopher answer'd, "That he was provided with all things necessary, ex-*

*cept one thing; what that was the King demanded; he replied, That if he*

*would upon his Wife's Tomb inscribe the names of three persons, who never*

*mourned, she presently would revive; the King, after inquiry, told the Philoso-*

*pher,*

many common miseries and misfortunes, in so generally confused and dismal a state of things, is it not ridiculously absurd for us, doth it not argue in us a prodigious fondness of self-love, heinously to resent, or impatiently to bemoan our particular and private crosses? May not reasonably that exhortation of *Jeremy to Baruch* reach us? *The Lord*

*saith thus, Behold, that which I have built, I will break down; and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land. And seekest thou great things for thy self? seek them not; for behold I will bring evil on all flesh.*

company in our conceived Woe; since it is so ordinary a thing to be poor, and distressed; since *our case is* (as the *Poet* speaketh) *not rare, but commonly known, trite, and drawn out from the heap of lots, offered to men by fortune*: Since pit- tiful objects do thus environ and enclose us; 'tis plainly rea- sonable, humane and just, that we should without murmur- ing take, and bear our lot: For what privilege have we

to alledge, that we rather than others should be untouched by the grievances, to which mankind is obnoxious? Whence may we pretend to be the special favourites, mignons, privado's and darlings of fortune? Why may not God as well deal with us, as he doth with other men; what grounds have we to chal- lenge, or to expect that he should be partial toward us; why should we ima- gine, that he must continually do miracles in our behalf, causing all those evils, which fall upon our neighbours all about to skip over us, bedewing us, like *Gideon's fleece*, with plenty and joy, while all the earth beside is dry; causing us, like the *three children*, to walk in this wide furnace, unscorched and un- singed by the flames encompassing us? Are we not men framed of the same mould; are we not sinners guilty of like offences, with the meanest Peasant, the poorest beggar, the most wretched slave (if so, then a parity of Fortune with any men doth become us, and may be due to us; then it is a perverse and unjust frowardness to be displeased with our lot) we may if we please, pity the common state of men, but we cannot reasonably complain of our own; doing so plainly doth argue, that we do unmeasurably overprize, and overlove our selves. When once a great King did excessively and obstinately grieve for the death of his Wife, whom he tenderly loved, a *Philosopher* observing it, told him, "That he was ready to comfort him by restoring her to life, "supposing only that he would supply what was needful toward the perform- ing it;" The King said he was ready to furnish him with any thing: the *Philosopher* answer'd, "That he was provided with all things necessary, ex- cept one thing; what that was the King demanded; he replied, *That if he would upon his Wife's Tomb inscribe the names of three persons, who never mourned, she presently would revive*; the King, after inquiry, told the *Philoso-*

pher,



pher, That he could not find one such man, *Why then, O absurdest of all men* (said the Philosopher smiling) *art thou not ashamed to moan as if thou hadst alone fallen into so grievous a case; when as thou canst not find one person, that ever was free from such domestick affliction?* So might the naming one person, exempted from inconveniences, like to those we undergo, be safely proposed to us as a certain cure of ours; but if we find the condition impossible; then is the generality of the case a sufficient ground of content to us; then may we, as the wise Poet adviseth, *solace our own evils by the evils of others*, so frequent and obvious to us.

5. We are indeed very apt to look upward toward those few; who, in supposed advantages of life (in wealth, dignity, or reputation) do seem to transcend, or to precede us, grudging and repining at their fortune; but seldom do we cast down our eyes on those innumerable many good people, who lie beneath us in all manner of accommodations, pitying their mean, or hard condition; like Racers we look forward, and pursue those who go before us, but reflect not backward, or consider those who come behind us: two or three outshining us in some slender piece of prosperity, doth raise dissatisfaction in us; while the doleful state of millions doth little affect us with any regard or compassion: hence so general discontent springeth, hence so few are satisfied with their condition; an epimedical eyesore molesting every man; for there is no man, of whatsoever condition, who is not in some desirable things outstripped by others; none is so high in fortune, but another in wit or wisdom, in health, or strength, or beauty, in reputation or esteem of men may seem to excel him; he therefore looking with an *evil* or envious eye on such persons, and with senseless disregard passing over the rest of men, doth easily thereby lose his ease and satisfaction from his own Estate: Whereas if we would consider the case of most men, we should see abundant reason to be satisfied with our own; if we would a little feel the calamities of our neighbours, we should little resent our own crosses; a kindly commiseration of others more grievous disasters would drown the sense of our lesser disappointments.

If with any competent heedfulness we view persons and things before us, we shall easily discern, that what absolutely seemeth great and weighty, is indeed comparatively very small and light; that things are not so unequally dispensed, but that we have our full share in good, and no more than our part in evil; \* that Socrates had reason to suppose, that, *if we should bring into one common stock all our mishaps, so that each should receive his portion of them, gladly the most would take up their own, and go their ways*; that consequently it is both iniquity and folly in us to complain of our lot.

6. If even we would take care diligently to compare our state with the state of those, whom we are apt most to admire and envy, it would afford matter of consolation, and content unto us. What is the state of the greatest persons (of the Worlds Princes and Grandees) what, but a state encompassed with snares and temptations numberless, which without extreme caution and constancy, force of reason, and command of all appetites and passions, cannot be avoided; and seldom are? What but a state of pompous trouble, and gay servility, of living in continual noise and stir, environed with crowds and throngs, of being subject to the urgency of business, and the tediousness of ceremony; of being abused by perfidious servants, and mocked by vile flatterers; of being exposed to common censure and obloquy, to misrepresentation, misconstruction and slander; having the eyes of all men intent upon their actions, and as many severe judges as watchful spectators of them; of being accountable for many mens faults, and bearing the blame of all miscarriages about them; of being responsible in conscience, for the miscarriages and mishaps which come from the influence of our counsels, our examples, &c. of being pester'd and pursu'd with pretences, with suits, with complaints, the necessary

\* *Ἐπεὶ δὲ πάντων ἀποπώταται θλίψεις ἀναιδώς, ὡς μόνῳ ἀλγεῖναι τοῦτο συμβαλὲς, ὁ μὲν δὲ ἔρα τῆς πάσης γυγνύται ἀμείων εἰκὲν πάλαι ἔχων ἄρεν.* Jul. Ep. 38.

*Παρηγορεῖται κατὰ δὲ ἐπὶ πάντων κακῶν.* Menand.

*Nulli ad alienis respicienti sua placent.* Sen. de Ira. 3. 31.

*Neque se majori pauperiorum Turba compares, hunc atque hunc superare labores: Ut cum carceribus, &c.* Hor. Sat. 1.

*Inde fit ut nemo qui se vixisse beatum dicat; &c.* Hor. Sat. 1.

*Si vis gratus esse adversus Deos, & adversus vitam tuam, cogita quam multos antecesseris.* Sen. Ep. 15.

*Nunquam eris felix, quem torquetis felicior.* Sen. de Ira. 3. 31. Vid. Ib.

\* *Εἰ συνενέγκαιμι εἰς τὸ κοινὸν τὰς ἀτυχίας, ὥς ἐνελεῖται τὸ ἴσον ἑκάστων, ἀσφαλὲς ἂν τὸς πλείους τὰς αὐτῶν λαβόντας ἀπελθόν.* Plut. Apoll. That at worst we are Extremi primum, extremis usque priores. Hor. Epist. 2. 2.

*Magna servitus est magna fortuna, &c.* Sen. ad Polyb. 26.



necessary result whereof is to displease and provoke very many, to oblige or satisfy very few, of being frequently engaged in resentments of ingratitude, of treachery, of neglects, of defects in duty, and breaches of trust toward them; of being constrained to comply with the humours and opinion of men; of anxious care to keep, and jealous fear of losing all; of danger and being objected to the traitorous attempts of bold male-contents, of fierce zealots and wild fanaticks; of wanting the most solid and savoury comforts of life, true friendship, free conversation, certain leisure, privacy and retiredness, for enjoying themselves, their time, their thoughts as they think good; of satiety and being cloyed with all sorts of enjoyments: In fine, of being paid with false coin for all their cares and pains, receiving for them scarce any thing

*Personata felicitas. Sen. Ep. 80.*

*Pfal. 62. 9.*

*adulandi certamen est. & unum omnium amicorum officium. una contentio quis blandissime fallat. Sen. de Benef. 6. 30.*

*Vid. optime differentem.*

*Vid. & de Clem. 1. 19.*

*Et ad Polyb. 26.*

*Antigonus. Nescitis amici, quid mali sit imperare, &c. Saturninus apud Vopiscum.*

*Hic situs est Adrian. VI qui nihil sibi in vita infelicius duxit quam quod imperavit. Lud. Guicciard. P. Jovius in vit.*

were it offered to our choice, never embrace; such indeed, as in sober judgment, we cannot prefer before the most narrow and inferiour fortune: How

more, but empty shews of respect, and hollow acclamations of praise; (whence the *Psalmist* might well say, *Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree a lye*; a lye, for their state cheateth us, appearing so specious, yet being really so inconvenient and troublesome.) Such is the state of the greatest men; such as hath made wise Princes weary of themselves, ready to acknowledge, that if men knew the weight of a Crown, none would take it up; apt to think with *Pope Adrian*, who made this *Epitaph* for himself; *Here lyeth Adrian the Sixth, who thought nothing in his life to have befallen him more unhappy, than that he ruled*: Such, in fine, their state, as upon due consideration we should, when we may even pity *Emperours* and *Kings*, when, in reality, we are as well, perhaps much better than they.

*Nihil difficilius quam bene imperare. Dioclet. apud Vopisc. in Aureliano.*

#### 7. Farther, it

Consider what Calamities great, powerful, glorious men have endured; *Craesus*, *Polyxer*, *Pomp.* &c. *Sen. de Ira. 3. 25.*

*Οἱ δὲ ἑλλήνων ἀριστοὶ πάντες δέξοντες πάντα τὰ βίον. (Aristides, Phocion, Epaminondas, Pelipodas.)* *Æl. X. 9. 11. 43.*

*Lamachus, Socrates, Ephialtes.*

*Abel, Noe, &c. Chryl. Tom. 6. p. 107.*

from his Kindred, to wander in a strange land, and lodge in Tents, without any fixed habitation. *Jacob* spent a great part of his life in slavish toil, and in his old age was in reflection upon his life moved to say, *that the days of his pilgrimage had been few and evil*. *Joseph* was maligned and persecuted by his Brethren, sold away for a slave, slandered for a most heinous crime, thrust into a grievous prison, where his feet were hurt with fetters, and his soul came into iron. *Moses* was forced to fly away for his life, to become a vagabond in

*Gen. 47. 9.*  
*Pfal. 105. 18.*

*Σιδνεὺς δὲ ἡλθεν ἐν ἰσχυρῇ αὐτῶ.*

*Socrates, Cato, Regulus, Phocion, &c. Magnum exemplum nisi mala fortuna non invenit.*

*Vid. Chryl.*

*Tom. 5. Or. 27.*

*p. 168. &*

*Tom. 6. Or. 10.*

*p. 107.*

*Job. 13. 27.*

*1 Sam. 26. 20.*

*Νῦν καὶ πάλας ἐστὶν ἡ γενομένη ἀνδροποὶ ἀπαντες οἱ τῷ θεῷ φίλοι τῷ συγγνώμῃ καὶ ἐπιμύχῳ καὶ μετὰ τὸν θάνατον δεινῶς ἐκληρώθησαν αὐτοί. Chryl. in Mart. Egypt. T. 5. 522.*

*Ἐν τοῖς περασμένοις ἡμετέροις οἱ δίκαιοι, τὰς ἀγίας ἀπαντας ἕως ἡμεῶν ὁ θεὸς διὰ θλίψεως. Chryl. in 2 Cor. Or. 27.*

*Lam. 3. 1.*  
*Acts 7. 52.*

*man that have seen affliction by the rod of his wrath, &c. Which of the Prophets were*

not



not persecuted, and misused? as St. Stephen asked. The Apostles were pinched with all kinds of want, harassed with all sorts of toil, exposed to all manner of hazards, persecuted with all variety of contumelies, and pains that can be imagined: Above all, our Lord himself beyond expression was a man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief, surpassing all men in suffering as he did excel them in dignity, and in virtue; extreme poverty, having not so much as where to lay his head, was his portion; to undergo continual labour and travel, without any mixture of carnal ease or pleasure, was his state; in return for the highest good will and choicest benefits, to receive most cruel hatred, and grievous injuries, to be loaded with the bitterest reproaches, the foulest slanders, the sorest pains which most spiteful malice could invent, or fiercest rage inflict, this was his lot: Am I poor? To, may one say, was he to extremity; Am I slighted of the World? so was he notoriously; Am I disappointed, and crossed in my Designs? so was he continually; all his most painful endeavours having small effect; Am I deserted or betrayed of Friends? so was he by those who were most intimate, and most obliged to him; Am I reviled, slandered, misused? Was not he so beyond all comparison most outrageously?

Have all these, and many more, of whom the world was not worthy, undergone all sorts of inconvenience, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; And shall we then disdain, or be sorry to be found in such company? Having such a cloud of martyrs, Let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Is it not an Honour, should it not be a comfort to us, that we do, in condition, resemble them? If God hath thus dealt with those, who of all Men have been dearest to him, shall we take it ill at his hands, that he, in any manner, dealeth so with us? Can we pretend, can we hope, can we even wish to be used better, than God's first-born, and our Lord himself hath been? If we do, are we not monstrously fond and arrogant? especially considering, that it is not only an ordinary fortune, but the peculiar character of Gods chosen, and children, to be often crossed, checked and corrected; Even Pagans have observed it, and avowed there is great reason for it; God (saith Seneca) hath a fatherly mind toward good men; and strongly loveth them—therefore after the manner of severe parents, he educateth them hardly, &c. The Apostle doth in express terms assure us thereof; for, whom (saith he) the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons—but if ye be without chastisement, whereof all (that is, all good men, and genuine Sons of God) are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Would we be illegitimated, or expunged from the number of God's true children; would we be divested of his special regard and good-will? if not, Why do we not gladly embrace, and willingly sustain adversity, which is by himself declared so peculiar a badge of his children, so constant a mark of his favour? if all good men do (as the Apostle asserteth,) partake thereof; shall we, by displeasure at it, shew, that we desire to be assuredly none of that party, that we affect to be discarded from that holy and happy society? Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament; but the world shall rejoice. It is peculiarly the lot of Christians, as such, in conformity to their afflicted Saviour; they are herein predestinated to be conformable to his image; to this they are appointed. (Let no man, saith St. Paul, be moved by these afflictions, for ye know, that we are appointed thereunto;) to this they are called (if when we do well, saith St. Peter, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God; for even hereunto are we called) this is propounded to them as a condition to be undertaken, and undergone by them as such; they are by profession crucigeri, bearers of the cross; (If any one will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me; Every one that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution) by this are they admitted into the state of Christians; (by many afflictions we must enter into the Kingdom of heaven) this doth qualify them for enjoying the glorious rewards, which their religion pro-

poundeth;



Acts 14. 22.  
Vid. Greg. Naz. Ep. 201. (ad The-  
clam.)  
2 Tim. 2. 12.  
(Phil 3. 10.)  
\* It is a privilege of Christians.  
in favour bestowed on them; *ὁμνῶν*  
*ἐχαρίσθη.* Phil. 1. 29.  
Our glory, Eph. 3. 13.  
*ἡ δόξα τοῦ Χριστοῦ.* Heb. 10. 36.  
Faith and Patience are comforts.  
Heb. 6. 12. Apoc. 13. 10.

poundeth; (*We are coheirs with Christ; so that, if we suffer together, we shall also together be glorified with him; If we endure, we shall also reign with him;*) \* And shall we then pretend to be Christians, shall we claim any benefit from thence, if we are unwilling to submit to the Law, to attend the call, to comply with the terms thereof? Will we enjoy its privileges, can we hope for its rewards, if we will not contentedly undergo what it requireth? Shall we arrive to the end it propoundeth, without going in the way it prescribeth, the way which our Lord himself doth lead

us in, and himself hath trod before us?

In fine, seeing adversity is, as hath been declared, a thing so natural to all men, so common to most men, so incident to great men, so proper to good men, so peculiar to Christians, we have great reason to observe the *Apostles* advice; *Beloved, wonder not concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as if some strange thing happened to you; we should not wonder at it as a strange, or uncouth thing, that we are engaged in any trouble or inconvenience here; we are consequently not to affected with it as a thing very grievous.*

## S E R M O N IX.

### Of CONTENTMENT.

P H I L. iv. 11.

*I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.*

1 Tim. 6. 6.  
*Ἐστὶ δὲ μέγας πλεονεξίας ἢ δόξα καὶ αὐταρχείας.*

Aug. de Civ.  
Dei. 1. 8.

*Cui cum paupertate bene convenit, dives est.* Sen. Ep. 2.  
*Nemo aliorum sensu miser est, sed suo; & ideo non possumus cuiusquam falso iudicio esse miseri, qui sunt vere conscientia sua beati. Nulli beatiore sunt, quam qui hoc sunt quod volunt.* Salv. de Gubern. Dei, 1.

**M**oreover considering the nature of this duty it self, may be a great inducement and aid to the practice of it.

1. It is it self a sovereign remedy, for all poverty and all sufferance; removing them, or allaying all the mischief they can do us.

It is well and truly said by St. *Austine*, *Interest non qualia, sed qualis quis patitur; It is no matter what, but how disposed a man suffereth*: The chief mischief any adversity can do us is to render us discontent, in that consisteth all the sting, and all the venom thereof; which thereby being voided, adversity can signify nothing prejudicial, or noxious to us; all distraction, all distemper, all disturbance from it is by the antidote of contentedness prevented or corrected. He that hath his desires moderated to a temper suitable with his condition, that hath his passions composed and settled agreeably to his circumstances, what can make any grievous impression on him, or render him any-wise miserable?

He that taketh himself to have enough, what doth he need? he that is well-pleased to be as he is, how can he be better? What can the largest Wealth, or highest prosperity in the World yield more, or better, than satisfaction of mind? He that hath this most essential ingredient of felicity, is he not thence in effect most fortunate? is not at least his condition as good as that of the most prosperous?

2. As



2. As good, do I say? yea is it not plainly much better, than can arise merely from any secular prosperity? for satisfaction springing from rational consideration, and virtuous disposition of mind, is indeed far more precious, more noble and worthy, more solid and durable, more sweet and delectable, than that which any possession, or fruition of worldly goods can afford: The τὸ ἀρδάρτον τὸ πρᾶτον, καὶ ἡσυχία πνευματική, incorruptibility (as St. Peter speaketh) of a meek and quiet spirit is before God of great price; before God, that is, according to the most upright and certain judgment it is the most precious and valuable thing in the World; There is (the Philosopher could say) no spectacle more worthy of God (or grateful to him) than a good man gallantly combating with ill fortune. Not to be discomposed or discomposed in mind, nor to fret or whine, when all things flow prosperously and according to our mind, is no great praise, no sign of wisdom, or argument of goodness; it cannot be reckoned an effect of sound judgment, or virtuous affection, but a natural consequent of such a state: But when there are evident occasions, and urgent temptations to displeasure, when present sense and fancy do prompt and provoke to murmuring, then to be satisfied in our mind, then to keep our passions in order, then to maintain good humour, then to restrain our tongue from complaint, and to govern our demeanour sweetly, this is indeed honourable and handsome; to see a worthy man sustain crosses, wants, disgraces with equanimity and cheerfulness is a most goodly sight: such a person to a judicious mind appeareth in a far more honourable and invidious state, than any prosperous man: his virtue shining in the dark is far more bright and fair: this (as St. Peter saith, in a like case) is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God suffereth grief; if, in our case (we may say after him) a man out of conscientious deference to God's Will, doth contentedly undergo adversity, this God is ready to take for an obligation on himself, and will be disposed in a manner to to thank him (or to reward him) for it: This indeed amounteth to a demonstration that such a person is truly wise and really good: so is the satisfaction of a contented poor man more worthy: And it is no less more sweet and comfortable, than that of any rich man, pleasing himself in his enjoyments; contentedness satisfieth the mind of the one, abundance doth only satiate the appetites of the other; the former is immaterial and sprightly, the complacency of a man; the latter is gross and dull, like the sensuality of a beast; the delight of that sinketh deep into the heart, the pleasure of this doth only float in the outward senses, or in the fancy; one is a positive comfort, the other but a negative indolency in regard to the mind: The poor good man's joy is wholly his own, and home-born, a lovely child of reason and virtue; the full rich man's pleasure cometh from without, and is thrust into him by impulses of sensible objects.

Hence is the satisfaction of contented adversity far more constant, solid and durable, than that of prosperity; it being the product of immutable reason abideth in the mind, and cannot easily be driven thence by any corporeal impressions, which immediately cannot touch the mind; whereas the other, issuing from sense, is subject to all the changes, inducible from the restless commotions of outward causes affecting and altering sense: whence the satisfaction proceeding from reason and virtue, the longer it stayeth the firmer and sweeter it groweth, turning into habit, and working nature to an agreement with it; whereas usually the joys of wealth and prosperity do soon degenerate into fastidiousness, and terminate in bitterness, being honey in the mouth, but soon becoming gall in the bowels. Nothing indeed can affect the mind with a truer pleasure, than the very conscience of discharging our duty toward God in bearing hardship, imposed by his providence, willingly and well. We have therefore much reason not only to acquiesce in our straits but to be glad of them, seeing they do yield us an opportunity of immediately obtaining goods, more excellent and more desirable, than any prosperous or wealthy man can easily have, since they furnish us with means of acquiring and exercising a virtue worth the most ample fortune; yea justly preferable to the best estate in

Οὐ γὰρ τὸ ποιῆσαι τι χρηστὸν μόνον ἀλλὰ τὸ παθεῖν τι κακὸν πολλὰς ἔχει τὰς ἀμοιβὰς καὶ μεγάλα τὰ ἔπαθλα. Chryl. ad Olymp. Ep. 3. Vid. p. 73.

Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ ὑπομονὴς εἰς ἀδοκίμωσιν λόγον ἴσον ἢ γὰρ βασιλεὺς ἢ ἀγαθὸν, καὶ ἢ σφεδρὸν ἢ κορωνίς αὐτῇ μάστιγι ἐστίν. Chryl. ad Olymp. Ep. 16. Vid. Epist. 6. & ad Olymp. Epist. 3. 3. (p. 75.) de Josepho. 1 Pet. 3. 4.

Ecce par Deo dignum vir bonus cum mala fortuna composuit. Sen. de Provid.

Honeste res est lata paupertas. Epic. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ δὶα τὸ θεῶν τι πάχων μόνον ἀδοκίμει, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ ἀδίκως τι πάχων, καὶ φέρων ἡμετέρας, καὶ δὲ χαλεπὸν τὸ συγχωρεῖν. Δεῖ γὰρ ἐκ ἐλαττῶν τὸ δὶα τὸ θεῶν ταῦτα πάχωντες εἶναι. Chryl. ἀνδρ. 5.

Apoc. 10. 10. Job 20. 20, 22.



the World; a virtue, which indeed doth not only render any condition tolerable, but sweetneth any thing, yea sanctifieth all states, and turneth all occurrences into blessings.

3. Even the sensible smart of adversity is by contentedness somewhat tempered and eased; the stiller and quieter we lye under it, the less we feel its violence and pungency: It is tumbling and tossing, that stirreth the ill humours, and driveth them to the parts most weak, and apt to be affected with them; the rubbing of our sores is that which enflameth and exasperateth them: Where the mind is calm, and the passions settled, the pain of any grievance is in comparison less acute, less sensible.

4. Whence if others in our distress are uncharitable to us, refusing the help they might, or should afford toward the rescuing us from it, or relieving us in it, we hereby may be charitable and great benefactors to our selves; we should need no *anodyne* to be ministred from without, no succour to come from any creature, if we would not be wanting to our selves, in hearkening to our own reason, and enjoying the consolation which it affordeth. In not doing this, we are more uncharitable and cruel to our selves, than any spiteful enemy or treacherous friend can be; no man can so wrong or molest us, as we do our selves by admitting or fostering discontent.

5. The contented bearing of our condition is also the most hopeful and ready means of bettering it, and of removing the pressures we lie under.

It is partly so in a natural way, as disposing us to embrace and employ the advantages which occur conducive thereto; for as discontent blindeth men so that they cannot descry the ways of escape from evil, it dispiriteth and discourageth them from endeavouring to help themselves, it depriveth them of many succours and expedients, which occasion would afford for their relief; so he that being undisturbed in his spirit hath his eyes open and his courage up, and all his natural powers in order, will be always ready and able to do his best, to act vigorously, to snatch any opportunity, and employ any means toward the freeing himself from what appeareth grievous to him.

Upon a supernatural account content is yet more efficacious to the same purpose: For chearful submission to God's Will doth please him much, doth strongly move him to withdraw his afflicting hand, doth effectually induce him to advance us into a most comfortable state: Of all virtues there is none more acceptable to God than patience. God will take it well at our hands if we do contentedly receive from his hand the worst things: 'tis a monstrous thing not to receive prosperity with grateful sense, but it is heroical with the same

mind to receive things unpleasant: he that doth so *ζημιῖται μὲν ὡς ἄνθρωπος*, *ὡς ἑρπύστης δὲ ὡς τιμωρὸς*, he suffereth loss as a man, but is crowned as a lover of God. Besides that it is an unreasonable thing to think of enjoying both rest and pleasure here, and the rewards hereafter; our consolation here with *Dives*, and our refreshment hereafter with *Lazarus*.

1 Pet. 5. 6. Be humbled (saith St. Peter) under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time (*ἐν καιρῷ*, when it is opportune and seasonable:) and Be humble (saith St. James) before the Lord, and he will exalt you; and, When (saith Job's friends, men are cast down, then thou shalt say there is lifting up, and he will save the humble person. God with favourable pity hearkeneth to the groans of

them who are humbly contrite under his hand, and reverently tremble at his word; he reviveth the spirit of the humble; He is nigh to the broken of heart, and saveth such as are of a contrite spirit; He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds; He proclaimeth blessedness to the poor in spirit, and to those that mourn, because they shall find comfort and mercy; all which declarations and promises are made concerning those who bear adversity with a submissive and contented mind; and we see them effectually performed in the cases of *Ahab*, of the *Ninevites*, of *Nebuchadnezzar*, of *Manasses*, of *Hezekiah*, of *David*; of all persons mentioned in holy Scripture, upon whom adversities had such kindly operations. But discontent and impatience do offend God, and provoke him to continue his judgments, yea to increase the load of them; To be sullen and stubborn is the sure way to render our Condition worse, and more intolerable: For, who hath hardened himself against God and prospered? The *Pharaohs* and *Sauls*, and such like persons, who

Job 9. 4.



who rather would break than bend, who being dissatisfied with their condition chose rather to lay hold on other imaginary succours, than to have recourse to God's mercy and help; those, who (like the refractory *Israelites*) have been *smitten in vain* as to any quiet submission or conversion unto God, what have they but plunged themselves deeper into wretchedness?

It is indeed to quell our haughty stomach, to check our froward humour, to curb our impetuous desires, to calm our disorderly passions, to suppress our fond admiration and eager affection toward these worldly things, in short to work a contented mind in us, that God ever doth inflict any hardships on us, that he crosseth us in our projects, that he detaineth us in any troublesome state; until this be achieved, as it is not expedient that we should be eased, as relief would really be no blessing to us; so God (except in anger and judgment) will no-wise grant or dispense it; it would be a cruel mercy for him to do it: If therefore we do wish ever to be in a good case as to this World, let us learn to be contented in a bad one: Having got this disposition firmly rooted in our hearts, we are qualified for deliverance and preferment; nor will God fail in that due season to perform for us what he so often hath declared and promised; his nature disposeth him, his word hath engaged him to help and comfort us.

These are the most proper inducements unto contentedness, which considering (in the light of reason and holy *Scripture*) the nature of the thing, suggested unto my meditation: there are beside some other means advisable, (some general, some more particular) which are very conducive to the production of content, or removing discontent; which I shall touch, and then conclude.

1. A constant endeavour to live well, and to maintain a good conscience. He that doeth this can hardly be dismay'd or disturbed with any occurrence here; this will yield a man so ample and firm a satisfaction of mind, as will bear down the sense of any incumbent evils; this will beget such hope in God, and so good assurance of his favour, as will supply the want of all other things, and fully satisfy us, that we have no cause to be troubled with any thing here: He that by conscientious practice hath obtained such a hope is prepared against all assaults of fortune with an undaunted mind and force impregnable; *He will not be afraid of any evil tidings, for his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord.* Maintaining this will free us from all anxious care, transferring it upon God; it will breed a sure confidence, that he will ever be ready to supply us with all things convenient, to protect and deliver us from all things hurtful; ensuring to us the effect of that promise, by the conscience of having performed the condition thereof: *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you*

This was that which supported the *Apostles*, and kept them chearful under all that heavy load of distresses which lay upon them; *Our rejoicing is this* (could they say) *the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity — we have had our conversation in this world.*

'Tis the want of this best pleasure, that both rendreth the absence of all other pleasures grievous, and their presence insipid: Had we a good conscience we could not seem to want comfort; as we could not truly be unhappy, so we could hardly be discontent; without it no affluence of other things can suffice to content us. It is an evil conscience that giveth an edge to all other evils, and enableth them sorely to afflict us, which otherwise would but slightly touch us; we become thence incapable of comfort, seeing not only things here upon earth to cross us, but heaven to lowre upon us; finding no visible succour, and having no hope from the power invisible; yea having reason to be discouraged with the fear of God's displeasure. As he that hath a powerful enemy near, cannot abide in peace, without anxious suspicion and fear; so he that is at variance with the Almighty, who is ever at hand, ready to cross and punish him, what quiet of mind can he enjoy? *There is no peace to the wicked.*

2. The contemplation of our future state is a sovereign medicine to work contentedness, and to cure discontent: as discontent easily doth seize upon, and cleaveth fast to Souls, which earnestly do pore and dote upon these present things, which have in them nothing satisfactory or stable, so if we



can raise our minds firmly to believe, seriously to consider, and worthily to prize the future state and its concerns, we can hardly ever be discontent in regard to these things. Considering heaven and its happiness, how low and mean, how sordid and vile, how unworthy of our care and our affection will these inferior things appear? How very unconcerned shall we see ourselves to be in them, and how easily thence shall we be content to want them? What, shall any of us be then ready to say, doth it concern me in what rank or garb I pass my few days here? what considerable interest can I have in this uncertain and transitory state? what is any loss, any disgrace, any cross in this World to me, who am a Citizen of Heaven, who have a capacity and hope of the immense riches, the incorruptible glories, the perfect and endless joys of eternity? This was that which sustained the holy Apostles in all their distresses; *For this cause* (saith St. Paul) *we faint not* — *while we look not on the things which are seen, but on the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal*; and *I reckon* (saith he again) *that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*.

2 Cor. 7. 31.  
2 Cor. 4. 16.  
Eccl. 5. 7.

Rom. 8. 18.

If likewise we do with faith and seriousness consider the dismal state below of those, who are eternally secluded from all joy and bliss, who are irrecoverably condemned to utter darkness, and the extremity of horrible pain, how tolerable, how pleasant, how very happy will the meanest state here appear to be? how vain a thing will it then seem to us to be to dislike, or to be troubled with any worldly thing; to account any chance happening to us to be sad, or disastrous? What, shall we say then each of us, is the same loss to the loss of my Soul and all its comforts for ever? what is this want to the perpetual want of heavenly bliss? what is this short and faint pain to the cruel pangs of endless remorse, to the *weeping and gnashing of teeth in utter darkness, to everlasting burnings*?

Thus infinitely silly and petty must all concerns of this life appear to him, who is possessed with the belief and consideration of matters relating to the future state; whence discontent in regard to them can hardly find access to his mind.

3. Constant devotion is an excellent instrument and guard of content, an excellent remedy and fence against discontent.

Matt. 7. 11.  
Psalm. 145. 18.  
Jam. 4. 8.  
Psalm. 34. 6.  
107. 6.

Phil. 4. 7.  
(Psalm. 25. 16.  
86. 1. 4. 17.  
44. 23.)

It is such in way of impetration, procuring the removal, or alleviation of our crosses: For God hath promised that *he will give good things to those that ask him*; *The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him in truth*; *he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him*; *he also will hear their cry, and will save them*. *The poor man cryeth, and the Lord heareth him, and saveth him out of all his troubles*; the holy Scripture is full of such declarations and promises, assuring us of succour from our distresses, upon our supplication to God; whence St. Paul thus adviseth against all solicitude: *Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer, and supplication with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God*: And (addeth, signifying the consequence of this practice) *the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ*.

2 Cor. 12. 9.  
1 Cor. 10. 13.

It likewise performeth the same by procuring grace and aid from God, which may enable and dispose us to bear all evils well, which is really much better than a removal of them; for that hence they become wholesome and profitable to us, and causes of present good, and grounds of future reward; thus when St. Paul besought God for deliverance from his thorn in the flesh, the return to him was; *My grace is sufficient for thee*; *for my strength is made perfect in weakness*: It was a greater favour to receive an improvement of spiritual strength, occasioned by that cross, than to be quite freed from it.

Devotion also hath immediately of it self a special efficacy to produce content. As in any distress it is a great consolation, that we can have recourse to a good Friend, that we may discharge our cares and our resentments into his bosom; that we may demand advice from him, and, if need be, request his succour; so much more it must be a great comfort, that we can in our need approach to God, who is infinitely the most faithful, the most affectionate, the most



most sufficient Friend that can be; always most ready, most willing, most able to direct and to relieve us: He desires, and delights, that *in the day of our trouble we should seek him*; that *we should pour forth our hearts before him*; that we should cast our burthens, and our cares upon him, that we should upon all occasions implore his guidance and aid: And complying with his desires as we shall assuredly find a successful event of our devotions, so we shall immediately enjoy great comfort and pleasure in them.

The God of all consolation doth especially by this channel convey his comfort into our hearts; his very presence (that presence, in which the Psalmist saith *there is fulness of joy*) doth mightily warm and cheer us; his Holy Spirit doth in our religious intercourse with him insinuate a lightsome serenity of mind, doth kindle sweet and kindly affections, doth scatter the gloomy clouds of sadness; practising it we shall be able to say with the Psalmist, *In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.*

Humbly addressing our selves to God, and reverently conversing with him doth compose our minds, and charm our passions, doth sweeten our humour, doth refresh and raise our spirits, and so doth immediately breed and nourish contentedness.

It also strengthneth our faith, and quickeneth our hope in God, whereby we are enabled to support our present evils, and peace of mind doth spring up within us.

It enflameth our love unto God, in sense of his gracious illapses, thence rendring us willing to endure any want or pain for his sake, or at his appointment.

It in fine doth minister a ravishing delight, abundantly able to supply the defect of any other pleasures, and to allay the smart of any pains whatever; rendring thereby the meanest estate more acceptable and pleasant, than any prosperity without it can be. So that if we be truly devout we can hardly be discontent: It is discosting from God by a neglect of devotion, or by a negligence therein, that doth expose us to the incursions of worldly regret and sorrow.

These are general Remedies and Duties both in this and all other regards necessary, the which yet we may be induced to perform in contemplation of this happy fruit (contentedness) arising from them. Farther,

4. It serveth toward production of contentedness to reflect much upon our imperfection, unworthiness and guilt; so as thereby to work in our hearts a lively sense of them, and a hearty sorrow for them; this will divert our sadness into its right channel, this will drown our lesser grief by the influx of a greater. It is the nature of a greater apprehension or pain incumbent to extinguish in a manner, and swallow up the sense of a lesser, although in it self grievous; as he that is under a fit of the stone doth scarce feel a pang of the gout; he that is assaulted by a wolf will not regard the biting of a flea. Whereas then of all evils and mischiefs moral evils are incomparably far the greatest, in nature the most ugly and abominable, in consequence the most hurtful and horrible; seeing (in St. Chrysostome's language)

*Excepting sin, there is nothing grievous or terrible among humane things; not poverty, not sickness, not disgrace, not that which seemeth the most extremum of all evil, death it self; those being names only among such as philosophate, names*

*of calamity, void of reality; but the real calamity this, to be at variance with God, and to do that which displeaseth him; seeing evidently according to just estimation no evil beareth any proportion to the evil of Sin, if we have a due sense thereof, we can hardly be affected with any other accident: If we can keep our minds intent upon the heinous nature, and the lamentable consequences of Sin, all other evils cannot but seem exceedingly light and inconsiderable; we cannot but apprehend it a very silly and unhandsome thing to resent or regard them: What (shall we then judge) is poverty in comparison to the want of a good conscience? what is Sickness compared to distemper of mind, and decay of spiritual strength? what is any disappointment to the being defeated and overthrown by temptation? what any loss to the being deprived*

Psalm 77. 2. 27. 8. 105. 4. 62. 8.  
1 Sam. 1. 15. Psalm 55. 22.  
1 Pet. 5. 7. Psalm 5. 8. 27. 31. 31. 31.  
43. 3. 139. 24. 143. 10. 61. 2.  
Jer. 31. 9.

Psalm 16. 11.

Psalm 94. 19.

Isa. 26. 3.

Psalm 73. 26.  
69. 16. 23. 4.  
71. 20.

Οὐδὲν δεινὸν ἢ ἀνθρώπινον, ἀλλ' ἢ ἁμαρτία μόνη ἡ πένια, ἡ νόσος, ἡ ὄψις, ἡ ἐπιγῆσια, ἡ ἀτιμία, &c.  
Chrys. ἀνδρ. 8. 7. 6.  
Vid. ad Olymp. Ep. 13. ad Theod. 1.

of



of God's love and favour? what any disgrace to the being out of esteem and respect with God? what any unfaithfulness or inconstancy of friends to having deserted or betrayed our own soul? what can any danger signify to that of eternal misery, incurred by offending God? what pressure can weigh against the load of guilt, or what pain equal that of stinging remorse? In fine, what condition can be so bad as that of a wretched Sinner? any case surely is tolerable, is desirable, is lovely and sweet in comparison to this: Would to God, may a man in this case reasonably say, that I were poor and forelorn as any beggar; that I were covered all over with botches and blains as any *Lazar*; that I were bound to pass my days in an hospital or a dungeon; might I be chained to an oar, might I lye upon the rack, so I were clear and innocent: Such thoughts and affections if reflecting on our sinful doings and state do suggest and impress, what place can there be for resentment of other petty crosses?

Contrition also upon this score is productive of a certain sweetness and joy apt to quash or to allay all worldly grief: as it *worketh a salutary repentance* *not to be repented of*, so it therewith breedeth a satisfactory comfort, which doth ever attend repentance: He that is very sensible of his guilt, cannot but consequently much value the remedy thereof, mercy; and thence earnestly be moved to seek it; then in contemplation of divine goodness, and considering God's gracious promises, will be apt to conceive faith and hope, upon his imploring mercy, and resolution to amend; thence will spring up a chearful satisfaction, so possessing the heart, as to expel or to exclude other displeasures: A holy and a worldly sadness cannot well consist together.

2 Cor. 7. 10.  
Vid. Chryl. ad  
Demet. & ad  
Stelech. 10m.  
6.

5. Another good instrument of contentedness is sedulous application of our minds to honest employment. Honest studies and cares divert our minds, and drive sad thoughts from them: They chear our spirits with wholesome food and pleasant entertainments; they yield good fruits, and a success accompanied with satisfaction, which will extinguish or temper discontent: While we are studious or active, discontent cannot easily creep in, and soon will be stifled.

Idleness is the great mother and the nurse of discontent; it layeth the mind open for melancholly conceits to enter; it yieldeth harbour to them, and entertainment there; it depriveth of all the remedies and allays which business affordeth.

Mater me ge-  
nuit.

Reciprocally discontent also begetteth idleness, and by it groweth: They are like ice and water, arising each out of the other: We should therefore not suffer any sadness so to encroach upon us, as to hinder us from attending to our business (the honest works and studies of our calling) for it thereby will grow stronger and more hardly vincible.

\*Αγαθὴ ὁ  
παρρησιασ  
δὲν ἐταίρα.

6. A like expedient to remove discontent is good company. It not only sometimes ministreth advices and arguments for content, but raiseth the drooping spirit, erecting it to a loving complaisance; drawing it out towards others in expressions of kindness, and yielding delight in those which we receive from others, infecting us by a kind of contagion with good humour, and instilling pleasant *Idea's* into our fancy, agreeably diverting us from sad and irksome thoughts: Discontent affecteth retirement and solitude, as its element and food; good company partly starveth it by smothering sad thoughts, partly cureth it by exhilarating discourse. No man hardly can find displeasure, while friendly conversation entertaineth him; no man returneth from it without some refreshment and ease of mind.

7. Having right and lowly conceits of our selves is a most sure guardian and procurer of content: For answerable to a man's judgment of himself are his resentments of the dealing he meeteth with from God or man. He that thinks meanly as he ought of himself, will not easily be offended at any thing; any thing, will he think, is good enough for me; I deserve nothing from God, I cannot deserve much of man; if I have any competence of provision for my life, any tolerable usage, any respect, it is more than my due, I am bound to be thankful: But he that conceiteth highly (that is vainly) of himself, nothing will satisfy him; nothing, thinks he, is good enough for him, or answerable to his deserts; no body can yield him sufficient respect; any small neglect disturbeth



sturbeth and enrageth him; he cannot endure that any man should thwart his interest, should cross his humour, should dissent from his opinion; Hence seeing the world will not easily be induced to conceit of him as he doth of himself, nor to comply with his humours and pretences, it is impossible that he should be content.

8. It conduceth to this purpose to contemplate and resent the publick state of things, the interest of the World, of our Country, of God's Church. The sense of publick calamities will drown that of private, as unworthy to be considered or compared with them: The sense of publick prosperity will allay that of particular misfortune. How (will a wise and good man say) can I desire to prosper and flourish, while the State is in danger or distress? how can I grieve, seeing my Country is in good condition? is it just, is it handsome that I should be a Non-conformist either in the publick sorrow or joy? Indeed,

9. All Hearty Charity doth greatly alleviate discontent. If we bear such a good will to our Neighbour as to have a sincere compassion of his evils, and complacence in his good, our case will not much afflict us. If we can appropriate and enjoy the prosperity, the wealth, the reputation of our Neighbour, by delighting in them, what can we want; what can displease us? If our heart be enlarged in pity for the misfortunes of others, it cannot be contracted with grief for our own: Our sorrow, like water, being thus diffused, cannot be so deep but it will be more fruitful; it will produce such effects as will comfort and please us; It is a stingy selfishness which maketh us so very sensible of crosses, and so incapable of comfort.

10. Again, if we will attain contentment, we must take heed of setting our affection upon any worldly thing whatever, so as very highly to prize it, very passionately to affect it, very eagerly to pursue it; so as to conceive our happiness in any measure to hang on it, or stick thereto: If there be any such thing, we shall be disappointed in the acquist, or the retention of it; or we shall be dissatisfied in its enjoyment.

So to adhere in affection to any thing is an adulterous disloyalty toward our Maker and best Friend; from which it is expedient that we should be reclaimed; whence God (in just anger, or in kind mercy) will be apt to cross us in our attempts to get it, or to deprive us of its possession; whence the displeasure will follow, which always attendeth a separation from things we love. But if we be suffered to obtain or to retain it, we shall soon find dissatisfaction therein; being either disgusted with some bitterness in it (such as doth lurk in every sensible good) or being cloyed with its lusciousness: it after a small enjoyment will become either distastful or insipid.

This, according to continual experience, is the nature of all things, pleasant only to sense or fancy, presently to satiate: No beauty can long please the eye, no melody the ear, no delicacy the palate, no curiosity the fancy; a little time doth waste away, a small use doth wear out the pleasure, which at first they afford: Novelty commendeth and ingratiateth them; distance representeth them fair and lovely; the want or absence of them rendreth them desirable; but the presence of them dulles their grace, the possession of them deadneth the appetite to them.

New objects with a gentle and grateful touch warble upon the corporeal organs, or excite the spirits into a pleasant frisk of motion; but when use hath levigated the organs, and made the way so smooth and easie that the spirits pass without any stop, those objects are no longer felt, or very faintly; so that the pleasure ceaseth.

Only those things which reason (religious and sound reason) doth approve, do yield a lasting (undecaying, unalterable) satisfaction; if we set our affections on them, we cannot fail of content: In seeking them we cannot be disappointed, for God (without any reservation or exception) hath promised to bestow them upon those who seriously and diligently seek them: nor can we be dispossessed of them; God will not take them away, and they lie beyond the reach of any other hand: Having them then we cannot but fully and durably be satisfied in the fruition of them; the longer we have them, the more we shall like them; the more we taste them, the better we shall relish them: time  
wasteth



wasteth not, but improveth the sense of their unfading beauty and indefectible sweetness.

11. It is of great influence toward contentedness with an earnest and impartial regard to contemplate things, as they are in themselves, divested of tragical appearances, in which they are wrapt by our own inconsiderate fancy, or which vulgar prejudices do throw upon them: As all things, looked upon by the corporeal eye through a mist, do seem bigger than in reality they are, so to the eye of our mind all things (both good and evil) seem hugely enlarged, when viewed through the foggs of our dusky imagination, or of popular conceit. If we will esteem that very good, which with a gay appearance dazzleth our imagination, or which the common admiration and applause of men recommendeth, the most vain and worthless, the most dangerous, the most mischievous things often will appear such; and if we please to account those things greatly bad which look ugly or horridly to imagination, which are defamed by the injudicious part of men; or which men commonly do loath, do fret at, do wail for, we shall take the best, most innocent, most useful, most wholesome things for such, and accordingly these errours of our minds will be followed by a perverse practice, productive of dissatisfaction and displeasure to us. No man ever will be satisfied, who values things according to the price which fancy setteth on them, or according to the rate they bear in the common market; who distinguisheth not between good and famous, bad and infamous; who is affected accordingly with the want of those things, which men call good, with the presence of those which they term bad.

But if we judge of things as God declareth, as impartial and cautious reason dictateth, as experience diligently observed (by their fruits and consequences) discovereth them to be, we shall have little cause to be affected by the want, or presence of any such thing which is wont to produce discontent.

12. We should to this purpose take especial care to search out through our condition, and pick thence the good that is therein, making the best we can of it, enjoying and improving it; but what is inconvenient or offensive therein declining it, diminishing it, tempering it so well as we may, always forbearing to aggravate it. There are in nature divers simples, which have in them some part, or some juice very noxious, which being severed and cast away, the rest becometh wholesome food; neither indeed is there any thing in nature so venomous, but that from it by art and industry may be extracted somewhat medicinal, and of good use, when duly applied, so in most apparent evils lieth inclosed much good, which if we carefully separate (casting away the intermixed dross and refuse) we shall find benefit, and taste comfort thence; there is nothing so thoroughly bad, as being well ordered, and opportunely ministered will not do us much good: So if from poverty we cast away or bear quietly that which a little pincheth the sense, or grateth on the fancy, and enjoy the undistractedness of mind, the liberty, the leisure, the health, the security from envy, obloquy, strife, which it affordeth, how satisfactory may it become to us? The like conveniencies are in disgrace, disappointment, and other such evils, which being improved may endear them to us: Even Sin it self (the worst of evils, the only true evil) may yield great benefits to us; it may render us sober and lowly in our own eyes, devout in imploring mercy, and thankful to God for it; merciful and charitable toward others in our opinions and censures; more laborious in our good practice, and watchful over our steps: And if this deadly poison well administered yieldeth effects so exceedingly beneficial and salutary, what may other harmless (through unhand-some, and unpleasant) things do, being skilfully managed?

13. It is a most effectual means of procuring content, and curing discontent, to rowse and fortify our faith in God, by, with most serious attention, reflecting upon the arguments and experiments, which assure us concerning God's particular providence over all, over us. It is really infidelity (in whole, or in part, no faith, or a small and weak faith) which is at the root, as of all sin, so particularly of discontent: For how is it possible, did we firmly believe, and with any measure of attention consider that God taketh care of us, that he tendereth our good, that he is ready at hand to succour us, (how then, I say, is it possible) that we should fear any want, or grievously resent any thing



thing incident? But we like St. Peter are *ὀλιγόπιστοι*, of *little faith*, therefore we cannot *walk on the sea*; but in despair sink down: Sometimes our faith is buried in oblivion or carelessness; we forget, or mind not that there is a Providence; but look on things as if they fell out casually or fatally; thence expect no redress from Heaven, so tumble into despair and disconsolateness. Sometimes because God doth not in our time and our way relieve us or gratify us we slip into profane doubt, questioning in our hearts whether he doth indeed regard us, or whether any relief is to be expected from him; not considering, that only God can tell when and how it is best to proceed; that often it is not expedient our wishes should be granted; that we are not wise enough, or just enough to appoint or chuse for our selves; that it is impossible for God to gratify every man; that it would be a mad World, if God in his government thereof should satisfy all our desires.

We forget how often God hath succoured us in our needs and straits, how continually he hath provided for us; how patiently and mercifully he hath born with us, what miracles of bounty and mercy he hath performed in our behalf; we are like that distrustful and inconsiderate people, who *remembered* Psal. 78. 42. *not the hand of God, nor the day when he delivered them; remembered not the multitude of his mercies; but soon forgot his works, and waited not for his* Psal. 106. 7. *counsel: They forgot God their Saviour, who had done great things in Egypt,* 13, 21. *wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things in the red Sea.*

From such dispositions in us our discontents do spring; and we cannot cure them, but by recollecting our selves from such forgetfulness and negligence; by shaking off such wicked doubts and distrusts; by fixing our hearts and hopes on him, who alone can help us; who is *our strength, the strength of our heart,* Psal. 22. 19. *of our life, of our salvation.* 46. 1. 81. 1. 59. 7. 144. 1. Psal. 73. 26. 27. 1. 140. 7.

Of him (to conclude) let us humbly implore, that he in mercy would bestow upon us grace to submit in all things to his Will, to acquiesce in all his dispensations, gladly to embrace and undergo whatever he alloteth to us; in every condition, and for all events befalling us heartily to adore, thank and bless him: Even so to the Ever-blessed God, our gracious maker and preserver, be eternally rendred all glory, thanksgiving and praise. *Amen.*

## S E R M O N X.

### Of PATIENCE.

1 P E T. ii. 21.

*Because also Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his Steps.*

**I**N these Words two things appear especially observable; a duty implied (the duty of *patience*) and a reason expressed, which enforceth the practice of that duty (the *example of Christ*.) We shall (using no more Preface, or circumstance) first briefly, in way of explication and direction, touch the duty it self, then more largely describe, and urge the example.

The word *patience* hath, in common usage, a double meaning, taken from the respect it hath unto two sorts of objects, somewhat different. As it respecteth provocations to anger, and revenge by injuries, or discourtesies, it signifieth a disposition of mind to bear them with charitable meekness; as it rela-



teth to adversities and crosses disposed to us by providence, it importeth a pious undergoing and sustaining them. That both these kind of patience may here be understood, we may, consulting and considering the context, easily discern: that which immediately precedeth, *If when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable to God*, relateth to good endurance of adversity; that which presently followeth, *who when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered he threatened not*, referreth to meek comporting with provocations: The Text therefore, as it looketh backward, doth recommend the patience of adversities, as forward, the patience of contumelies. But seeing both these objects are reducible to one more general, comprizing both, that is, things seeming evil to us, or offensive to our sense, we may so explicate the duty of patience, as to include them both.

Patience then is that virtue, which qualifyeth us to bear all conditions, and all events, by God's disposal incident to us, with such apprehensions and persuasions of mind, such dispositions and affections of heart, such external deportments, and practices of life, as God requireth, and good reason directeth. Its nature will, I conceive, be understood best by considering the chief acts which it produceth, and wherein especially the practice thereof consisteth; the which briefly are these.

1. A thorough persuasion, that nothing befalleth us by fate, or by chance, or by the meer agency of inferiour causes, but that all proceedeth from the dispensation, or with the allowance of God, (that, *Affliction doth not come forth of the dust, nor doth trouble spring out of the ground*; but that all, both good and evil proceedeth out of the mouth of the most high) according as David reflected, when Shimei reviled him; *Let him* (saith the good King) *curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David*; and as Job, when he was spoiled of all his goods, acknowledged, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away*.

2. A firm belief, that all occurrences (however adverse and cross to our desires) are well consistent with the justice, wisdom and goodness of God; so that we cannot reasonably disapprove, repine at, or complain of them; but are bound and ready to avow with the Psalmist, that *All his paths are mercy and truth*; *He is righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works*; to judge and say with Hezekiah, *Good is the word of the Lord, which thou hast spoken*; to confess with David unto him, *I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right; and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me*.

3. A full satisfaction of mind, that all (even the most bitter, and sad accidents) do (according to God's purpose) tend and conduce to our good; acknowledging the truth of those divine Aphorisms; *Happy is the man whom God correcteth; whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a Father the Son, in whom he delighteth. As many as I love, I rebuke, and chasten*.

4. An entire submission, and resignation of our wills to the will of God; suppressing all rebellious insurrections, and grievous resentments of heart against his providence; which may dispose us heartily to say after our Lord, *Let not my will, but thine be done*; with good Eli, *It is the Lord, Let him do what seemeth him good*; with David, *Here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good to him*; yea even with Socrates, *If so it pleaseth God, so let it be*.

5. Bearing adversities calmly, chearfully and courageously; so as not to be discomposed with anger, or grief; not to be put out of humour, not to be dejected or disheartened; but in our disposition of mind to resemble the primitive Saints, who were *ὡς λυπημένοι ἀλλ' ὡς χαίροντες*, as grieved, but always rejoicing; who took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, who accounted it all joy when they fell into divers tribulations.

6. A hopeful confidence in God for the removal or easement of our afflictions, and for his gracious aid to support them well; agreeable to those good rules and precepts? *It is good that a man should both hope, and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord; Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him; wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart*; according to the pattern of David, who, in such a case, thus roused and staid himself: *Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance*;



nance; and after the holy *Apostles*, who in their most forlorn estate could say, *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.* 2 Cor. 4. 8.

7. A willingness to continue, during God's pleasure, in our afflicted state, without weariness, or irksome longings for alteration; according to that advice of the wise Man, *My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction;* and that of the *Apostle*, back'd with our Lord's example; *Considering him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be weary, and faint in our minds.* Prov. 3. 11. Heb. 12. 3.

8. A lowly frame of mind (that is, being sober in our conceits of our selves, sensible of our unworthiness, and meanness, of our natural frailty, penury and wretchedness; of our manifold defects and miscarriages in practice; being meek and gentle, tender and pliable in our temper and frame of spirit; being deeply affected with reverence and dread toward the awful majesty, mighty power, perfect justice and sanctity of God; all this) wrought by our adversity effectually, according to its design, quelling our haughty stomach, softning our hard hearts, mitigating our peevish humours; according to St. Peter's injunction, *Be humbled under the mighty hand of God;* and God's own approbation joined with a gracious promise, *To this man will I look; even to him that is of a poor and contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.* 1 Pet. 5. 6. Ez. 66. 2.

9. Restraining our Tongues from all discontentful complaints and murmurings, all prophane, harsh, unfavoury expressions, importing displeasure, or dissatisfaction in God's dealing toward us, arguing desperation or distrust in him; such as were those of the impatient and incredulous *Israelites*; *They spake against God, and said, can God furnish a table in the wilderness? behold he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also, can he provide flesh for his people?* Such as they used, of whom the Prophet said — *When they shall be hungry, they will fret themselves, and curse their King, and their God;* such as they were guilty of, whom St. Jude called *γολυσάδαις ἢ μωμολόγοις*, *murmurers, and querulous persons*, (or such as found fault with their lot) that which is stiled, *charging God foolishly*; for abstaining from which (notwithstanding the pressure of his most grievous calamities) *Job* is commended (where 'tis said, *Job sinned not, neither charged God foolishly*) that which the Prophet condemneth as unreasonable in that expostulation; *Wherefore doth the living man complain?* In such cases we should smother our passions in a still and silent demeanour, as the *Psalmist* advised, and as he practised himself: *I was dumb (saith he) and opened not my mouth, because it was thy doings.* Yea contrariwise patience requireth. Psal. 78. 19, 20. Isa. 8. 21. Jude 16. Job 1. 22. Lam. 3. 49. Psal. 37. 7. 46. 10. 4. 4. Psal. 39. 9.

10. Blessing and praising God (that is, declaring our hearty satisfaction in God's proceedings with us, acknowledging his wisdom, justice and goodness therein, expressing a grateful sense thereof, as wholesome and beneficial to us) in conformity to *Job*, who, upon the loss of all his comforts, did thus vent his mind: *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.* Job 1. 21.

11. Abstaining from all irregular and unworthy courses toward the removal, or redress of our crosses; chusing rather to abide quietly under their pressure, than by any unwarrantable means to relieve or relaxe our selves; contentedly wearing, rather than violently *breaking our yoke, or bursting our bonds*; rather continuing poor, than striving to enrich our selves by fraud or rapine; rather lying under contempt, than by sinful or sordid compliances attempting to gain the favour and respect of men; rather embracing the meanest condition, than labouring by any turbulent, unjust, or uncharitable practices to amplify our Estate; rather enduring any inconvenience, or distress, than *setting our faces toward Egypt*, or having recourse to any succour which God disalloweth; according to what is replied in that reprehension of St. Paul, *Now therefore it is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to Law one with another; Why do ye not rather take wrong; why do ye not rather suffer your selves to be defrauded?* and in that advice of St. Peter; *Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful creator.* Jer. 5. 5. Jer. 42. 15. 1 Cor. 6. 7. 1 Pet. 4. 19.

12. A fair behaviour toward the instruments and abettors of our affliction; those who brought us into it, or who detain us under it, by keeping off relief,



lief, or sparing to yield the succour which we might expect; the forbearing to express any wrath or displeasure, to exercise any revenge, to detain any grudge, or enmity toward them; but rather even upon that score bearing good-will, and shewing kindness unto them; unto them, not only as to our brethren, whom according to the general law of charity we are bound to love, but as to the Servants of God in this particular case, or as to the instruments of his pleasure toward us, considering that by maligning or mischiefing them, we do signifie ill resentment of God's dealings with us, and in effect through their sides, do wound his Providence: Thus did the *pious King* 2 Sam. 16. 7. demean himself, when he was bitterly reproached, and cursed by *Shimei*; not suffering (upon this account) any harm or requital to be offered to him; thus 1 Cor. 4. 12. did the holy *Apostles*, who *being reviled did bless, being persecuted did bear it, being defamed did intreat*; thus did our Lord deport himself toward his spiteful adversaries, who *being reviled did not revile again; when he suffered did not threaten, but committed it to him that judgeth righteously.* 1 Pet. 2. 23. 3. 9.

13. Particularly in regard to those, who by injurious and offensive usage, do provoke us; patience importeth,

1. That we be not hastily, over-easily, not immoderately, not pertinaciously incensed with anger toward them; according to those divine Precepts, and Aphorisms; *Be slow to wrath; Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of fools. Give place to wrath* (that is, remove it.) Jam. 1. 19. Ecclef. 7. 9. Prov. 16. 32. 14. 17. 29. *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking be put away from you, with all malice. Cease from anger, let go displeasure, fret not thy self any-wise to do evil.* Rom. 12. 19. Eph. 4. 31. 26. Coloss. 3. 8. Matt. 5. 21, 24. Psal. 37. 8.

2. That we do not in our hearts harbour any ill-will, or ill-wishes, or ill-designs toward them, but that we truly desire their good, and purpose to further it, as we shall have ability and occasion; according to that Law (even charged on the Jews) *Thou shalt not bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self*; and according to that noble command of our Saviour; *Love your enemies; pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.* Levit. 19. 18. Matt. 5. 44. Luke 6. 27.

3. That in effect we do not execute any revenge, or for requital do any mischief to them, either in word or deed; but for their reproaches exchange blessings (or good words and wishes) for their outrages repay benefits and good turns; according to those Evangelical Rules; *Do good to them that hate you, Bless them that curse you: Bless them that persecute you, bless and curse not: See that none render evil for evil: Be pitiful, be courteous, not rendring evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing: If thine enemy hunger feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: Say not I will do to him as he hath done to me; I will render to the man according to his work: Say thou not I will recompense evil, but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee.* Matt. 5. 44. 39. Rom. 12. 14. 1 Theff. 5. 15. 1 Pet. 3. 9. Prov. 25. 21. Rom. 12. 20. Prov. 24. 29. 20. 22.

14. In fine, Patience doth include and produce a general meekness and kindness of affection, together with an enlarged sweetness, and pleasantness in conversation and carriage toward all men; implying, that, how hard soever our case, how sorry or sad our condition is, we are not therefore angry with the World, because we do not thrive, or flourish in it; that we are not dissatisfied, or disgusted with the prosperous estate of other men; that we are not become fullen or froward toward any man, because his fortune excelleth ours; but that rather we do *rejoice with them that rejoice*; we do find complacence and delight in their good success, we borrow satisfaction and pleasure from their enjoyments.

In these and the like acts, the practice of this virtue (a virtue, which all men, in this state of inward weakness, and outward trouble, shall have much need and frequent occasion to exercise) consisteth; unto which practice, even Philosophy, natural reason, and common sense do suggest many inducements; the tenour of our holy Faith and Religion do supply more and better; but nothing can more clearly direct, or more powerfully excite thereto, than that admirable example, by which our Text doth enforce it: Some principal of those rational inducements we shall cursorily touch, than insist upon this example.

It



It will generally induce us to bear patiently all things incident, if we consider, That it is the natural right and prerogative of God to dispose of all things, to assign our station here, and allot our portion to us; whence it is a most wrongful insolence in us, by complaining of our state, to contest his right, or impeach his management thereof: That we are obliged to God's free bounty for numberless great benefits and favours; whence it is vile ingratitude to be displeased for the want of some lesser inconveniencies: That God having undertaken, and promised to support and succour us, it is a heinous affront to distrust him, and consequently to be dissatisfied with our condition: That seeing God doth infinitely better understand what is good for us, than we can do; he is better affected toward us, and more truly loveth us than we do our selves; he with an unquestionable right hath an uncontrollable power to dispose of us, it is most reasonable to acquiesce in his choice of our state: That since we have no claim to any good, or any pleasure, and thence in withholding any, no wrong is done to us, 'tis unjust and frivolous to murmur, or grumble; since we are by nature, God's servants, it is fit the appointment of our rank, our garb, our diet, all our accommodations, and employments in his family, should be left entirely to his discretion and pleasure: That we being grievous Sinners, *less than the least of God's mercies*, meriting no good, but deserving sore punishment from him, it is just, that we should be highly content and thankful for any thing on this side death and damnation: That our afflictions, being the natural fruits and results of our choice, or voluntary miscarriages, it is reasonable we should blame our selves rather than pick quarrels with Providence for them. That our condition, be it what it will, cannot, being duly estimated, be extremely bad, or insupportably grievous; for that as no condition here is perfectly and purely good (not deficient in some accommodations, not blended with some troubles) so there is none that hath not its conveniences and comforts; for that it is our fond conceits, our froward humours, our perverse behaviours, which create them selves adherent to any state; for that also how forlorn forever our case is, we cannot fail, if we please, of a capacity to enjoy goods far more than countervailing all possible want of these goods, or presence of these evils; we may have the use of our reason, a good conscience, hope in God, assurance of God's love and favour, abundance of spiritual blessings here, and a certain title to eternal glory and bliss hereafter; which if we can have, our condition cannot be deemed uncomfortable. That indeed our adversity is a thing very good and wholesome, very profitable and desirable, as a means of breeding, improving and exercising the best virtues, of preparing us for, and entitling us to the best rewards: That our state cannot ever be desperate, our adversity probably may not be lasting (there being no connexion between the present and the future, vicissitudes being frequent, all things depending on the arbitrary dispensation of God, who doth always pity us, and is apt to relieve us.) That however our affliction will not outlive our selves, and certainly must soon expire with our life. That this World is not a place of perfect convenience, or pure delight; we come not hither to do our will, or enjoy our pleasure, we are not born to make laws, or pick our condition here; but that *trouble* is natural and proper to us (*We are born thereto, as the sparks flie upwards.*) *No tribulation seifeth us, but such as is humane;* Job 5. 7. Cor. 10. 13. whence 'tis reasonable that we contentedly bear the crosses suitable to our nature and state. That no adversity is in kind, or degree, peculiar to us; but if we survey the conditions of other men (of our brethren every where, of our neighbours all about us) and compare our case with theirs, we shall find, that we have many comforts and associates in adversity, most as ill, many far worse bestead than our selves; whence it must be a great fondness and perverseness to be displeased that we are not exempted from, but exposed to bear a share in the common troubles and burthens of mankind. That it hath particularly been the lot of the best men (persons most excellent in virtue, and most deep in God's favour) to sustain adversity; and it therefore becometh us willingly and chearfully to accept it. That, in fine, patience it self is the best remedy to ease us in, to rescue us from adversity, for it cannot much annoy us, if we bear it patiently; God will, in mercy, remove it, if we please him, by demeaning our selves well under it; but that impatience doth not



not at all conduce to our relief, doth indeed exasperate, and augment our pain: Such considerations may induce us to a patience in general respecting all sorts of evils.

There are also reasons particularly disposing to bear injuries and contumelies from men calmly and meekly, without immoderate wrath, rancorous hatred, or spiteful revenge toward them; Because they do proceed from divine providence disposing or permitting them (for the trial of our patience, the abasing our pride, the exercising of some other virtue, or for other good purposes) to fall upon us: Because vindication of misdemeanours committed against us doth not appertain to us; we not being competent Judges of them, nor right-ful executors of the punishments due to them; God having reserved to him-  
Rom. 12. 19. self the right of decision, and power of execution: *Vengeance is mine, saith*  
Heb. 10. 30. *the Lord, I will repay it.* Because we are obliged to interpret charitably the  
Deut. 32. 35, actions of our neighbour, supposing his miscarriages to proceed from infirmi-  
36. ty, from mistake, or from some cause, which we should be rather inclinable  
Vid. Tert. de to excuse, than to prosecute with hatred, or revenge. Because indeed our  
pat. cap. 10. neighbours most culpable offences, as issuing from distemper of mind, are  
more reasonably the objects of compassion, and charity, than of anger, or  
ill-will. Because we are bound to forgive all injuries by the command of God,  
and in conformity to his example, who passeth by innumerable most heinous  
Psal. 145. 8. offences committed against himself: *Gracious is the Lord, and full of compas-*  
86. 15. *sion, slow to anger, and of great mercy; long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and*  
*truth; so must we be also, if we will be like him, or please him.* Because  
we our selves, being subject to incur the same faults in kind, or greater in  
value, do need much pardon, and should thence be ready to allow it unto o-  
thers; both in equity, and in gratitude toward God; lest that in the Gospel  
Matt. 18. 32. be applied to us; *O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, be-*  
*cause thou desiredst me; shouldst not thou also have had compassion upon thy fel-*  
*low-servant, even as I had pity on thee?* Because God hath made it a necessa-  
ry condition of our obtaining mercy; promising us favour if we yield it,  
menacing us extremity, if we refuse it: *If ye forgive men their trespasses,*  
Matt. 6. 14: *your heavenly father will also forgive you; But if ye forgive not men their tref-*  
Eccles. 8. 2. *passes, neither will your father forgive your trespasses.* Because our neigh-  
Matt. 18. 35. bour suffering by our revenge in any manner (in his body, interest, or repu-  
Mark 11. 25. tation) doth not any-wise profit us, or benefit our estate, but needlessly doth  
multiply and encrease the stock of mischief in the World; yea commonly doth  
bring farther evil upon our selves, provoking him to go on in offending us,  
rendring him more implacably bent against us, engaging us consequently deep-  
er in strife and trouble: Because no wrong, no disgrace, no prejudice we can  
receive from men is of much consequence to us, if our mind be not disor-  
der'd, if we are free from those bad passions, which really are the worst evils  
that can befall us.

*Idcirco quis te laedit ut doleas, quia fru-  
ctus laedentis in dolore laesi est. Tert. de  
pat. 8.  
Si patientia incubabo non dolebo; si non  
dolebo, ulcisci non desiderabo. Ib. 10.*

Because, in fine, impatience it self is insignificant, and in-  
effectual to any good purpose; or rather produceth ill effects: It doth not cure our wound, or assuage our grief; it re-  
moveth no inconvenience, nor repaireth any damage we  
have received; but rather enflameth our distemper, and  
aggravateth our pain; more really indeed molesting and  
hurting us, than the injury or discourtesie which causeth it: Thus briefly doth  
reason dictate to us the practice of all patience.

But the example proposed by the *Apostle* here, and elsewhere by *St. Paul*  
Phil. 2. 5. (*Let the same mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus*—) by the *A-*  
Heb. 12. 1, 2. *postle to the Hebrews* (*Let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*  
*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith*—) by our Lord him-  
Matt. 11. 22. self (*Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly*) that doth in a more lively man-  
ner expresse how in such cases we should deport our selves, and most strong-  
ly engageth us to comply with duties of this nature. Let us now therefore de-  
scribe it, and recommend it to your consideration.

*Vid. Tertul.  
de Pat. c. 3.  
Cypr. de Pat.  
T. 2. p. 315.  
Isa. 53. 3.*

The example of our Lord was indeed in this kind the most remarkable  
that ever was presented, the most perfect that can be imagined: He was, a-  
bove all expression, *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*; he did un-  
dertake, as to perform the best works, so to endure the worst accidents, to  
which



which humane nature is subject; his whole life being no other than one continual exercise of patience, and meekness, in all the parts, and to the utmost degrees of them: If we trace the footsteps of his life, from the sordid Manger to the bloody Cross, we shall not be able to observe any matter of complacency, scarce any of comfort (in respect to his natural or worldly state) to have befallen him.

His parentage was mean, to appearance, and his birth, in all exterior circumstances, despicable: *Is not this the Carpenter's Son?* were words of contempt and offence, upon all occasions thrown upon him. Matt. 13. 55.  
Mark 6. 3.

His life was spent not only in continual labour, and restless travel, but in hard poverty, yea in extream penury, beneath the state, not only of the meanest Men, but of the most shifting Beasts: *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.* Matt. 8. 20.

For his necessary subsistence we find him often destitute of ordinary provision (as when he sought food from the barren Fig-tree) often indebted for it to the courtesie, and (as it were) alms of the vilest people, of *Publicans and Sinners*: so *δι' ἡμᾶς ἐπρωχάσαι* he was (as the *Apostle* saith) *a beggar for us.* Matt. 21. 18.  
19.  
Nullus mensam, rectumque despectit. Tert.  
2 Cor. 8. 9.

Yet may we never perceive him any-wise discontented with, or complaining of his condition; not discouraged, or depressed in spirit thereby, not solicitously endeavouring any correction or change thereof; but willingly embracing it, heartily acquiescing therein; and notwithstanding all its inconveniences, cheerfully discharging his duties, vigorously pursuing his main designs of procuring glory to God, and benefit to men.

Nor did he only with content undergo the incommodities of a poor estate, but he was surrounded with continual dangers; the most powerful men of those times (enraged with envy, ambition and avarice) desperately maligning him; and being incessantly attentive upon all occasions to molest, hurt and destroy him: *The world* (as he saith himself, that is all the powerful and formidable part of the World) *hating me*; Yet did not this any-wise dismay, or distemper him, nor cause him either to repine at his condition, or decline his duty. He utterly disregarded all their spiteful machinations, persisting immoveable in the prosecution of his pious and charitable undertakings, to the admiration of those who observed his demeanour: *Is not this he* (said they) *whom they seek to kill? but loe he speaketh boldly.* John 15. 18.  
John 7. 25.

He did indeed sometimes opportunely shun their fury, and prudently did elude their snares, but never went violently to repel them, or to execute any revenge for them; improving the wonderful power he was endued with, altogether to the advantage of mankind, never to the bane or hurt of his malicious enemies. Luke 4. 30.  
Matt. 21. 27.  
22. 18.

Sensible enough he was of the causeless hatred they bare him; (*ἐμίσησαν με δωρεάν*, *They*, said he, *have hated me for nothing*;) and of their extream ingratitude; yet never could he be provoked to resent, or requite their dealing; see how mildly he did expostulate the case with them; *Then* (saith St. John) *the Jews took up stones to stone him: Jesus answered them, Many good things have I shewed you from my Father, for which of those do ye stone me?* John 15. 25.  
John 10. 31.

To be extremely hated, and inhumanely persecuted without any fault committed, or just occasion offered, is greatly incensive of humane passion; but for the purest, and strongest good-will, for the most unexpressible beneficence, to be recompensed with most virulent reproaches, most odious slanders, most outrageous misuages, How exceeding was that meekness, which without any signification of regret, or disgust, could endure it?

Out of most tender charity, and ardent desire of their salvation, he instructed them, and instilled heavenly doctrine into their minds, what thanks, what reward did he receive for that great favour? to be reputed, and reported an Impostour: *ἡμεῖς καὶ οὐχ ὁυ, he* (said they) *doth impose upon the people.* Matt. 23. 37.  
John 7. 12.  
Matt. 27. 63.

He took occasion to impart the great blessing of pardon for Sin to some of them, confirming his authority of doing it by a miraculous work of goodness: How did they resent such an obligation? by accounting him a blasphemer: *Behold* (saith St. Matthew) *certain of the Scribes said within themselves, this man blasphemeth*: Which most harsh and uncharitable censure of theirs he did not Matt. 9. 3, 4.



Ingratos cura-  
vit, insidato-  
ribus cessit.  
Tert.

not fiercely reprehend, but calmed discussed, and refuted by a clear reasoning; *τι ἐν θυμῷ ἐκεῖ ποιεῖτε; Wherefore conceive ye evil in your hearts; for whether is easier to say, thy sins are forgiven thee, or to say, arise and walk?* that is, Is it not credible that he, who can perform the one, may dispense the other?

He freed them from most grievous diseases, yea rescued them from the greatest mischief possible in nature, being possessed by the unclean Fiend; How did they entertain this mighty benefit? by most horrible calumny accusing him of Sorcery, or conspiracy with the Devil himself: *The Pharisees said, he casteth out devils by the prince of the devils:* yea thence attributing to him the very name and title of the grand Devil: *If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more* (shall they defame) *them of his household?* Yet this most injurious defamation he no otherwise rebuked, than by a mild discourse, strongly confuting it; *Every Kingdom* (said he) *divided against it self is brought to desolation—and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his Kingdom stand?* that is, the Devil better understands his interest, than to assist any man in dispossessing himself.

He did constantly labour in reclaiming them from error and sin, in converting them to God and goodness, in proposing fair overtures of grace and mercy to them, in shewing them by word and practice the sure way to happiness; What issue was there of all his care and pains? What, but neglect, distrust, disappointment, rejection of himself, of what he said, and what he did? *Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?* was a Prophecy, abundantly verified by their carriage toward him.

These, and the like usages, which he perpetually did encounter, he constantly received without any passionate disturbance of mind, any bitter reflections upon that Generation, any revengeful enterprises against them; yea requited them with continued earnestness of hearty desires, and labourious endeavours for their good.

We might observe the ingrateful disrespects of his own Countreymen, and Kindred toward him, which he passeth over without any grievous disdain; rather excusing it, by noting that entertainment to have been no peculiar accident to himself, but usual to all of like employment; *No Prophet* (said he) *is acceptable in his own country.*

Non illi solum civitati qua eum recipere  
voluerat iratus est, cum etiam discipuli tam  
contumelioso oppido calidiores ignes representari  
voluissent. Tert.

We might also mention his patient suffering repulses from strangers; as when being refused admittance into a *Samaritan Village*, and his Disciples being incensed with that rude discourtesy, would have fire called down from Heaven to consume those Churls, he restrained their unadvised wrath, and thus

expressed his admirable meekness; *The Son of man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save them.*

We might likewise remark his meek comporting with the stupid and \* per-verse incredulity of his Disciples, notwithstanding so many pregnant, and palpable inducements continually exhibited for confirmation of their faith; the which he no otherwise, than sometime gently, admonisheth them of, saying, *τι δεῖλοι ἐσε ὀλιγόπιστοι; Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? ὀλιγόπιστε, τι ἐδίστασας; O thou of small faith, why didst thou doubt?*

What should I insist on these, although very remarkable instances? since that one scene of his most grievous (shall I say, or glorious) passion doth represent unto us a perfect and most lively image of the highest patience and meekness possible; of the greatest sorrow that ever was or could be, yet of a patience surmounting it; of the extreamest malice that ever was conceived, yet of a charity overruling it; of injury most intolerable, yet of a meekness willingly and sweetly bearing it. There may we observe the greatest provocations from all hands to passionate animosity of spirit, and intemperate heat of speech, yet no discovery of the least disorderly, angry, or revengeful thought, the least rash, bitter or reproachful word, but all undergone with clearest serenity of mind, and sweetness of carriage toward all persons.

To Judas, who betrayed him, How doth he address himself? Doth he use such terms as the Man deserved, or as passion would have suggested, and reason would not have disallowed: Did he say, Thou most perfidious Villain, thou



thou monster of iniquity and ingratitude; thou desperately wicked Wretch; Dost thou, prompted by thy base covetousness, treacherously attempt to ruin thy gracious Master, and best Friend; thy most benign and bountiful Saviour? No, instead of such proper language, he used the most courteous and endearing terms: *Ἐταίρε, ἢ ὅτι παῖς;* Friend (or companion) *for what dost thou come;* Matt. 26. 50. Or, what is thy business here? a tacite charitable warning there is to reflect upon his unworthy and wicked action, but nothing apparent of wrath, or reproach.

From his own disciples and servants, who had beheld his many miraculous works, and were indebted to him for the greatest favours, he reasonably might have expected a most faithful adherence, and most diligent attendance on him in that juncture; yet he found them careless, and slothful: What then? How did he take it? Was he angry, did he upbraid, did he storm at them? Did he threaten to discard them? No; he only first gently admonisheth them: *What, could ye not watch one hour with me?* then a little exciteth them, *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation:* He withal suggested an excuse for their drowsiness and dulness; *The Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak;* in fine, he indulgeth to their weakness, letting them alone, saying, *καθύστε λοιπὸν, Sleep on now and take your rest.* Matt. 26. 40, 45.

When he forelaw they would be offended at his (to appearance) disastrous estate, and fearfully would desert him, he yet expressed no indignation against them, or decrease of affection toward them upon that score; but simply mentioneth it, as unconcerned in it, and not affected thereby. Matt. 26. 31.

And the unworthy Apostasie of that Disciple, whom he had especially favoured and dignified, he only did mildly forewarn him of, requiting it foreseen by the promise of his own effectual prayers for his support and recovery; and when St. Peter had committed that heinous fact, our good Lord only looked on him with an eye of charity and compassion; which more efficaciously struck him, than the most dreadful threat, or sharp reprehension could have done; *Peter thereupon went out and wept bitterly.* Luke 22. 61, 62. *Ἐνέβλεψεν τὸ Πέτρον.*

When the High-Priests officer, upon no reasonable occasion, did injuriously and ignominiously strike him, he returned only this mild expostulation: *If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; if well, why smitest thou me?* That is, I advise thee to proceed in a fair and legal way against me, not to deal thus boisterously and wrongfully, to thy own harm. John 18. 23. Cyp. Ep. 65.

Even careful and tender he was of those, who were the instruments of his suffering; he protected them from harm, who conducted him to execution; as we see in the case of the High-Priests servant, whom (with more zeal, than wherewith he ever regarded his own safety) he defended from the fury of his own friend, and cured of the wounds received in the way of persecuting himself. Luke 22. 51.

All his demeanour under that great Trial was perfectly calm, not the least regret or reluctance of mind, the least contradiction, or obloquy of speech appearing therein; such it was as became *the Lamb of God*, who was to *take away the sins of the world*, by a willing oblation of himself; such as did exactly correspond to the ancient Prophecies; *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he was brought as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth; and I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting.* Isa. 53. 7. Isa. 50. 6.

Neither did the wrongful slanders devised and alledged against him by suborned witnesses, nor the virulent invectives of the Priests, nor the barbarous clamours of the people, nor the contemptuous spitting upon him, and buffeting him, nor the cruel scourgings, nor the contumelious mockeries, nor all the bloody tortures inflicted upon him, wring from him one syllable importing any dissatisfaction in his case, any wrath conceived for his misusages, any grudge or ill-will in his mind toward his persecutors; but on the contrary, instead of hatred and revenge he declared the greatest kindness and charity toward them, praying heartily to God his Father for the pardon of their sins. Instead of aggravating their crime and injury against him, he did in a sort extenuate and excuse it, by consideration of their ignorance and mistake:



Luke 23. 34. *Lord, (said he, in the height of his sufferings) forgive them, for they know not what they do.* The life they so violently bereaved him of, he did willingly mean to lay down for the ransom of their lives; the blood they spilt he wished to be a salutary Balsam for their wounds and maladies; he most chearfully did offer himself by their hands a sacrifice for their offences. No small part of his afflictions was a sense of their so grievously displeasing God, and pulling mischief on their own heads, a foresight of his kind intentions being frustrated by their obstinate incredulity and impenitence, a reflection upon that inevitable vengeance, which from the divine Justice would attend them; this foreseen did work in him a distasteful sense, (more grievous than what his own pain could produce) and drew from him tears of Compassion (such as no repentment of his own case could extort) for, *When he was come near he beheld the City, and wept over it, saying, O that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace.*

If ever he did express any commotion of mind in reference to this matter, it was only then when one of his friends, out of a blind fondness of affection, did presume to dissuade him from undergoing these evils; then indeed being somewhat moved with indignation he said to St. Peter, *Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.*

Neither was it out of a stupid insensibility or stubborn resolution that he did thus behave himself; for he had a most vigorous sense of all those grievances, and a strong (natural) aversion from undergoing them; as those dolorous Agonies wherewith he struggled, those deadly groans he uttered, those monstrous lumps of Blood he swet out, those earnest Prayers he made to be freed from them, declare; but from a perfect submission to the Divine Will, and entire command over his Passions, an excessive Charity toward Mankind, this patient and meek behaviour did spring: *The Cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? O my Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt; Let not my will, but thine be done. No man taketh away my life, but I lay it down of my own accord; I will give my flesh for the life of the world: So doth our Lord himself express the true grounds of his passion and his patience.*

Such is the Example of our Lord; the serious consideration whereof how can it otherwise than work patience and meekness in us; If he, that was the Lord of Glory (infinitely excellent in Dignity and Virtue) did so readily embrace, did so contentedly endure such extremities of penury, hardship, disgrace and pain, how can we refuse them or repine at them? Can we pretend to a better lot than he received, or presume that God must deal better with us than he did with his own dearest Son? Can we be displeased at a conformity to our Lord and Master? Can we without shame affect to live more splendidly, or to fare more deliciously than he chose to do? Shall we fret or wail, because our desires are crossed, our projects defeated, our interests any-wise prejudiced; when as his most earnest desires, and his most painful endeavours had so little of due and desired success: When he was ever ready, and had so constant occasion to say, *Let not my will be done?* Can we despise that state of meanness and sorrow which he from the highest sublimities of Glory and Beatitude was pleased to stoop unto? Can we take our selves for the want of any present conveniences or comforts to be wretched, when as the fountain of all happiness was destitute of all such things, and scarce did ever taste any worldly pleasure? Are we fit or *worthy to be his Disciples*, if we will not *take up his Cross and follow him*; if we will not go to his School (that School wherein he is said himself to have *learnt obedience*) if we will not con that lesson which he so loudly hath read out, and transcribe that Copy which he fairly hath set before us: Can we pretend to those great benefits, those high privileges, those rich and excellent rewards, which he hath attained for us, and which he proposeth to us, if we will not go on toward them in that way of patience which he hath trod before us?

Can we also, if we consider him that endureth such contradiction of sinners, be transported with any wrathful or revengeful passion, upon any provocation from our brethren? Can we hope, or wish for better usage from men than our



our Lord did ever find? Can we be much displeased with any man for thwarting our desires or interests, for dissenting from our conceits, for crossing our humours, when as he (to whom all respect and observance was due) did meet with so little regard or compliance in any way; continually did encounter repulses, disappointments, oppositions from the perverse and spiteful world? Can we be very jealous of our Credit, or furious when our imaginary honour (honour, that we never really deserved, or can justly claim, being guilty of so many great faults and sins) is touched with the least disgraceful reflection, if we do well observe and mind, that the most truly, and indeed only honourable personage (only honourable, because only innocent person) that ever was had his reputation aspersed by the most odious reproaches, which deepest Envy and Malice could devise, without any grievous resentment, or being solicitous otherwise to assert or clear it than by a constant silence? Can we be exasperated by every petty affront, (real or supposed) when the most noble, most courteous, most obliging person that ever breathed upon earth was treacherously exposed to violence by his own servant, shamefully deserted by his own most beloved friends, despitefully treated by those whom he never had offended, by those upon whom he had heaped the greatest benefits, without expressing any anger or displeasure against them, but yielding many signal testimonies of tenderest pity and love toward them? Can we see our Lord treated like a slave and a thief, without any disturbance or commotion of heart; and we vile wretches upon every slight occasion swell with fierce disdain, pour forth reproachful language, execute horrible mischief upon our brethren? He indeed was surrounded with injuries and affronts; every sin that since the foundation of things hath been committed was an offence against him, and a burthen upon him; (*God laid upon him the iniquities of us all*) Ila. 53. 6. so many declared enemies, so many Rebels, so many Persecutors, so many Murderers he had as there have lived men in the World; for every sinner did in truth conspire to his affliction and destruction; we all in effect did betray him, did accuse him, did mock, did scourge, did pierce and crucifie him; yet he forgave all offences, he died for all persons; *while we were yet enemies, yet sinners, he died for us*, to rescue us from death and misery: And shall we not then in imitation of him, for his dear sake, in gratitude, respect and obedience to him, be ready to bear the infirmities of our brethren, to forgive any small wrongs or offences from them; whatever they do to us, to love them, and do them what good we can? If so admirable a pattern of patience and meekness so immense cannot, what is there that can oblige or move us? I conclude with those doxologies to our so patient and meek Redeemer:

*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.* Apoc. 5. 12, 13.

*Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.* Apoc. 1. 5.



## SERMON XI.

## REJOYCE EVERMORE.

1 THESS. v. 16.

*Rejoyce evermore.*

**R** *Rejoyce evermore!* O good Apostle, how acceptable Rules dost thou prescribe? O blessed God, how gracious Laws dost thou impose? This is a Rule to which one would think all men should be forward to conform: This is a Law, which it may seem strange that any man should find in his heart to disobey: for what can any Soul desire more than to be always on the merry pin, or to lead a life in continual alacrity? who readily would not embrace a Duty, the observance whereof is not only pleasant, but pleasure it self? Who is so wild as to affect a sin, which hath nothing in it but disease and disgust?

That joy should be enjoined, that sadness should be prohibited, may it not be a plausible exception against such a Precept, that it is superfluous and needless, seeing all the endeavours of men do aim at nothing else, but to procure joy and eschew sorrow; seeing all men do conspire in opinion with Solomon, that *a man hath nothing better under the sun than to be merry?* Were it not rather expedient to recommend sober sadness, or to repress the inclinations of men to effuse mirth and jollity?

Ecd. 8. 15.  
2. 24. 3. 12.  
22. 5. 18, 26.

So it may seem; but yet alas, if we consult experience, or observe the World, we shall find this Precept very ill obeyed; for do we not commonly see People in heavy dumps; do we not often hear doleful complaints? Is not this World apparently a stage of continual trouble, and grief? Did not the Preacher, upon a diligent survey of *all the works done under the Sun*, truly proclaim, *Behold all is vanity and vexation of Spirit?* Where, I pray, is any full or firm content; where is solid and durable joy to be found?

Ecd. 1. 14.

It is true that men, after a confused manner, are very eager in the quest, and earnest in the pursuit of joy; they rove through all the Forest of Creatures, and beat every bush of Nature for it, hoping to catch it either in natural endowments and improvements of Soul, or in the gifts of Fortune, or in the acquits of Industry; in Temporal Possessions, in sensual Enjoyments, in ludicrous divertisements and amusements of Fancy; in gratification of their Appetites and Passions: They all hunt for it, though following a different scent, and running in various tracks, some in way of plodding for rare notions, some in compassing ambitious projects, some in amassing heaps of wealth, some in practice of over-reaching subtilties, some in wreaking their malice, their revenge, their envy; some in venting frothy conceits, bitter scoffs, or profane railleries; some in jovial conversation and quaffing the full bowls; some in musick and dancing; some in gallantry and courting; some in all kinds of riotous excess, and wanton dissoluteness; so each in his way doth incessantly prog for joy; But all much in vain, or without any considerable success; finding at most instead of it some faint shadows, or transitory flashes of pleasure; the which depending on causes very contingent and mutable, residing in a frail temper of fluid humours of body, consisting in slight touches upon the organs of sense, in frisks of the corporeal spirits, or in fumes and vapours twitching the imagination, do soon flag and expire; their short enjoyment being also tempered with regret, being easily dashed by any cross accident, soon declining into a nauseous satiety, and in the end degenerating into gall and bitter



ter remorse; for *Even* (as Solomon observed) *in laughter, the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness; and Though* (as it is said in Job) *wickedness is sweet in the mouth — yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of Asps within him*: So that indeed the usual delights, which men affect are such, that we should not if we could, and we could not if we would constantly entertain them; such *rejoycing evermore* being equally unreasonable and impossible.

Wherefore there is ground more than enough, that we should be put to seek for a true, substantial, and consistent joy; it being withal implied, that we should affect it in another way, or look for it in another box, than commonly men do; who therefore are so generally disappointed, because they would have it upon impossible or undue terms; and least expect it there, where it is only to be had.

It is a scandalous misprision, vulgarly admitted, concerning Religion, that it is altogether sullen and sour, requiring a dull, lumpish, morose kind of life, barring all delight, all mirth, all good humour: Whereas on the contrary it alone is the never-failing source of true, pure, steady joy; such as is deeply rooted in the heart, immoveably founded in the reason of things, permanent like the immortal spirit wherein it dwelleth, and like the eternal objects, whereon it is fixed; which is not apt to fade, or cloy; and is not subject to any impressions apt to corrupt, or impair it: Whereas in our Text, and in many Texts parallel to it, we see, that our Religion doth not only allow us, but even doth oblige us to be joyful as much and often as can be, not permitting us to be sad for one Minute, banishing the least fit of Melancholly, charging us in all times, upon all occasions to be cheerful; supposing consequently that it is in some manner possible to be so, and affording power to effect what it doth require.

Such indeed is the transcendent goodness of our God, that he maketh our delight to be our duty, and our sorrow to be our sin, adapting his holy Will to our principal instinct; that he would have us to resemble himself as in all other perfections, so in a constant state of happiness; that as he hath provided a glorious Heaven of bliss for us hereafter, so he would have us enjoy a comfortable paradise of delight here. He accordingly hath ordered the whole frame of our religion in a tendency to produce joy in those who embrace it; for what is the Gospel, but (as the holy Angel, the first promulger of it, did report) *good tidings of great joy to all people*? How doth God represent himself therein, but as *the God of love, of hope, of peace, of all consolation*, cheerfully smiling in favour on us, graciously inviting us to the most pleasant enjoyments, bountifully dispensing most comfortable blessings of mercy, of grace, of salvation to us? for what doth our Lord call us to him, but *that he may give us rest, and refreshment to our souls*; that he may *wipe away all tears from our eyes*; that he may save us from most woful despair, and settle us in a *blest hope*; that we may enter into our Master's joy, that *our joy may be full*, and such as *no man can take from us*?

What is the great overture of the Gospel, but the gift of a most blessed Comforter, to abide with us for ever, cheering our hearts with his lightesome presence, and ravishing consolations? Wherein doth the Kingdom of Heaven consist? *not in meat and drink, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*? What are the prime fruits sprouting from that root of Christian Life, the Divine Spirit? they are, as St. Paul telleth us, *Love, joy and peace*: Are there not numberless declarations importing a joyful satisfaction granted to the observers of God's Commandments; that *Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart*? Doth not our Lord pronounce a special beautitude to the Practiser of every virtue? And if we scan all the Doctrines, all the Institutions, all the Precepts, all the Promises of Christianity, will not each appear pregnant with matter of joy, will not each yield great reason, and strong obligation to this duty of *rejoycing evermore*?

Wherefore a Christian, as such, (according to the design of his Religion, and in proportion to his compliance with its dictates) is the most jocund, blith, and gay person in the World; always in humour, and full of cheer; continually

Prov. 14. 13.  
Sunt quædam tristes voluptates — Sen.  
Ep. 67.  
Job 20. 12. — 14. 20. 5.

Quaqua versum se verterit anima hominis, ad dolores figitur alibi, præterquam in se. Aug. Conf. 4. 10.

Luke 2. 10.

Rom. 5. 33.

13. 5.

Eph. 2. 4.

2 Cor. 1. 3.

13. 11.

1 Pet. 5. 10.

Jam. 5. 11.

Matt. 11. 28.

Apoc. 7. 17.

21. 4.

Tit. 2.

Matt. 25. 21.

John 15. 11.

16. 22, 24.

John 14. 16.

Rom. 14. 17.

Gal. 5. 22.

Psal. 97. 11.

118. 15. 32.

11. 68. 3.



tinually bearing a mind well satisfied, a light heart and calm spirit, a smooth brow and serene countenance, a grateful accent of speech, and a sweetly composed tenour of carriage: No black thought, no irksome desire, no troublesome passion should lodge in his breast; any furrow, any frown, any cloud doth sit ill upon his face; the least fretful word, or froward behaviour doth utterly misbecome him: If at any time it appear otherwise, 'tis a deflection from his character; tis a blemish and wrong to his profession; it argueth a prevarication in his judgment, or in his practice; He forgetteth that he is a Christian, or hath not preserved the innocence belonging to that Name. For, If a Christian remembreth what he is, or is sensible of his condition; if he reflecteth on the Dignity of his Person, the Nobleness of his Relations, the sublimity of his Privileges, the greatness and certainty of his Hopes, how can he be out of humour? Is it not absurd for him that is at peace with Heaven, with his own Conscience, with all the World; for the possessor of the best goods, and the Heir of a blessed immortality; for the Friend, the Favourite, the Son of God, to fret or wail?

He that is settled in a most prosperous state, that is (if he pleaseth) secure of its continuance, that is well assured of its improvement; that hath whatever good he can wish in his reach, and more than he can conceive in sure reversion, what account can be given that he should be sad, or seem afflicted?

He that hath the unexhaustible spring of good for his portion, that hath his welfare entrusted in God's most faithful hand; that hath God's infallible word for his support; that hath free access to him, *in whose presence is fulness of joy*; that hath frequent tastes of God's goodness, in gracious dispensations of Providence, in intercourse of devotion, in the influences of grace; that hath the infinite beauty and excellency for the perpetual object of his contemplation and affection; that enjoyeth the serenity of a sound mind, of a pure heart, of a quiet conscience, of a sure hope, what can he want to refresh or comfort him?

If a true and perfect Christian hath no care to distract him, having discharged all his concerns on God's Providence; If he hath no fear to dismay him, being guarded by the Almighty protection from all danger and mischief; If he hath no despair to sink him, having a sure refuge in the divine mercy and help; If he hath no superstitious terrors or scruples to perplex him, being conscious of his own upright intentions to please God, and confident of God's merciful willingness to accept his sincere endeavours; If he hath no incurable remorse to torment him, the stings of guilt being pulled out by the merits of his Saviour, applied by his faith and repentance: If he hath no longing desires to disquiet him, being fully satisfied with that he doth possess, or may expect from God's bounty; all other things being far beneath his ambition, or coveting: If he hath no contentions to enflame him, knowing nought here worth passionately striving for, and being resolved to hold a friendly good-will toward all men; If he hath no repining envy, seeing that none can be more happy than he may be, and that every man's good by charity is made his own; If he hath no fretful discontent, since he gladly doth acquiesce in the condition, and success allotted to him, resigning his will to God's pleasure, taking all for best which thence doth occur, being assured that *all things shall work together for his good* and advantage: If he hath no spiteful rancours to corrode

Ἐπιθυμίας ἀπελαδείσας εὐδίας ἢ  
ψυχὴν ἐγγαλιωθεῖσα γίνεται. Just. Mart.  
ad Grac. Paran. 2.

his heart, no boisterous passions to ruffle his mind, no inordinate appetites, perverse humours, or corrupt designs to distemper his soul, and disturb his life, whence then may sorrow come, or how can sadness creep into him?

What is there belonging to a Christian, whence grief naturally can spring? from God, *our exceeding joy*, the Fountain of Happiness; from Heaven, the region of light and bliss; from divine truth, which illustrateth and cheareth the soul; from God's Law, which *rejoiceth the heart*, and is *sweeter than honey and the honey-comb*; from wisdom, whose *ways are ways of pleasantness, and all whose paths are peace*; from virtue, which cureth our afflictive distempers, and composeth our vexatious passions; from these things, I say, about which a Christian as such is only conversant, no sorrow can be derived; from those sweet sources no bitter streams can flow; But hell, the flesh, the world, darkness,

Psal. 43. 4.

Psal. 19. 10.

119. 103.

Prov. 3. 17.



darkness, error, folly, sin and irreligion (things with which a Christian should have nothing to do, from which he should keep a-loof, which he doth pretend utterly to renounce and abandon) these, these alone, are the parents of discomfort and anguish.

Wherefore there is the same reason, the same obligation, the same possibility, that we should rejoyce evermore, as that we should always be Christians, exactly performing duty, and totally forbearing sin; for innocence and indolency do ever go together, both together making Paradise; perfect virtue and constant alacrity are inseparable companions, both constituting beatitude; And as although from our infirmity we cannot attain the highest pitch of virtue, yet we must aspire thereto, endeavouring to *perfect holiness in the fear of God*; so though it may not be possible to get, yet it is reasonable to seek perpetual joy; which doing in the right way we shall not fail of procuring a good measure of it. 2 Cor. 7. 1.  
Matt. 5. 48.  
1 John 3. 3.

Indeed to exercise piety and to rejoyce are the same things, or things so interwoven, that nothing can disjoin them; religious practice is like that river, the streams whereof make glad the City of God, the holy place of the Tabernacle of the most High, that is, every pious soul: No good deed can be performed without satisfaction; each virtue hath a peculiar delight annexed to it; whence the acts of joy, which upon various objects, grounds, and occasions, we may exert, being numberless, I shall only touch a few principal instances. Psalm. 46. 4.

I. We should evermore rejoyce in the exercise of our faith; according to that prayer of our Apostle for the Romans, *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.* Rom. 15. 13.

Every kind of faith (that which embraceth divine truths, that which applieth God's mercy, that which ensureth God's promises, that which confideth in God's providence, each of them) is a clear spring of joy, ever standing open to us; which he that drinketh, *shall never thirst.* Joh. 6. 35 7.  
38. 4. 14.

1. The faith, which embraceth God's heavenly truth, doth not only enlighten our minds, but is apt to affect our hearts; there being no Article of Faith, or mystery of our religion, which doth not involve some great advantage, some notable favour, some happy occurrence dispensed to us by the goodness of God, the which Faith doth apprehend and convey to our spiritual gust, so that we cannot hardly but receive the word with joy. For is it not very sweet with Faith to contemplate the rich bounty of God in the Creation of the World, and producing so goodly a Frame, so copious a store of things, with a special regard to our sustenance and accommodation? Is it not satisfactory to believe that God by his Almighty hand and vigilant care, with the same benign regard doth uphold and govern the same? Is it not extremely pleasant with faith to reflect on that great honour and happiness, which God did vouchsafe to confer on mankind, by sending down from Heaven his only Son to assume our nature, and to converse with men, that we might be advanced to a participation of the divine nature, and to an enjoyment of communion with God? How without great delight can we be persuaded, that our Saviour by his meritorious obedience and passion hath appeased God's wrath, and inclined his favour toward us, hath satisfied justice, hath expiated our offences, hath ransomed and rescued our souls from the dominion of Sin and Satan, from death and corruption, from Hell and everlasting torment; hath purchased immortal life, and endless bliss for us? What comfort is there in being assured by the resurrection, and triumph of our Lord over death, that our souls are indeed immortal, that our bodies shall be raised from the dust, that our persons are capable of an eternal subsistence in happiness? will it not much please us with an eye of faith to behold our Redeemer sitting in glorious exaltation at God's right hand, governing the World for the benefit of his Church, dispensing benediction and grace to us; interceding as our merciful and faithful High priest for the pardon of our sins, the acceptance of our prayers, the supply of our needs, and the relief of our distresses; If we be fully convinced, that our Lord Jesus is the Christ, our Lord and Saviour, the author of eternal Salvation to all that obey him, how can we otherwise than follow those, of whom St. Peter saith, *Whom having not seen ye love; in whom,* Matt. 13. 20.  
Phil. 1. 25.  
2 Pet. 1. 4.  
1 John 1. 3.  
Heb. 2. 17.  
1 John 2. 1.  
Heb. 5. 9.  
1 Pet. 1. 8.



whom, though ye now see him not, yet believing ye rejoyce with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: So from the hearty belief of every Evangelical Truth we may suck consolation; each of them is food to our Soul; and to believe it is to eat it; which how can we do without a delicious, or most savoury relish?

2. At least methinks that faith greatly should exhilarate us, which applieth those verities (so worthy of all acceptance) wherein God doth open his arms wide to embrace us, proposing most kind invitations, and favourable overtures of mercy, upon the fairest terms possible; together with effectual remedies for all the maladies and miseries of our souls: for if we are sensible of our heinous Guilts, if we are laden with the heavy burthen of our sins, if our heart is galled with sore compunction of our misdeeds; if we are struck with the *terrors of the Lord*, and tremble with the fear of God's judgments; how comfortable must it be to be perswaded that God is fully reconcileable to us, is very desirous to shew us mercy, and gladly will accept our repentance; that we have an advocate with the Father, who hath propitiated for our sins, doth mediate for our peace, hath both full power and certain will, if we sincerely do renounce our offences, wholly to remit them? so that there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit; and that being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Will not this belief revive us, and make the broken bones to rejoyce? will not the Gospel of peace be hence in truth a joyful sound to us? might it not hence well be proclaimed in the Prophet, *Comfort ye, Comfort ye my people; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her; that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.*

And if we find our selves in habit of soul grievously distempered, labouring under great impotency and blindness, overborn and oppressed with the prevalency of corruption, pestered with unreasonable desires and passions, unable to curb our inclinations and appetites, to resist temptations, to discharge our duty in any tolerable measure, or with any ease; is it not then comfortable to believe, that we have a most faithful and skilful Physician at hand to cure our distempers; that we have a powerful succour within ken, to relieve our infirmities; that God is ready to impart an abundant supply of grace, of light, of spiritual strength to direct and assist us; that if any man doth lack wisdom, he is encouraged with faith to ask it of God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not? if any man want strength, God's Almighty Spirit is promised to those, who with humble earnestness do implore it; so that we may be able to do all things (incumbent on us) by Christ who strengtheneth us.

3. And what more hearty satisfaction can we feel, than in a firm perswasion concerning the real accomplishment of those exceedingly great and precious promises, whereby we become capable of the most excellent privileges, the most ample benefits, the most happy rewards, that can be? how can the belief that by God's infallible word, or as surely as truth it self is true, an eternal inheritance of a treasure that cannot fail, of a glory that cannot fade, of a kingdom that cannot be shaken, of a felicity surpassing all expression and all conceit, is reserved for us, in recompence of our faithful obedience; how, I say, can that be a dead, dull, dry belief, void of sprightly comfort and pleasure?

Likewise the faith of confidence in God's good providence, and paternal care over us, (whatever our condition or circumstances be) should infuse a chearful refreshment of heart into us.

It is in holy Scripture most frequently asserted, that he who placeth his trust in God, is a very blessed and happy Person; and can we without great satisfaction partake of that beatitude?

Can we by such a trust disburthen all our solicitous cares, all our anxious fears, all the troubles of our spirit, and pressures of our condition upon God, with strong assurance, that from his mighty power and watchful care, in due time, in the most expedient manner, we shall receive a competent supply of our wants, a riddance from our grievances, a protection from all danger and harm, a blessing upon all our good endeavours and undertakings, without feeling much ease and peace in our hearts?

What



What can be more chearing than a perswasion, that all our concerns are lodged in the hands of such a Friend, so wise, so able, so faithful, so affectionate, so ever readily disposed to help us, and further our good? They who trust in God, are said to *abide under the shadow of the Almighty*, and to *be covered with his wings*; God is often styled their rock, their fortress, their shield and buckler, their defence and refuge; And are they not then impreg-  
Psal. 91. 1.  
Psal. 61. 4.  
91. 4. 57. 1.  
17. 8. 36. 7.  
18. 2. 62. 2.  
Psal. 112. 2.  
Psal. 63. 7.  
Psal. 28. 7.  
(Psal. 33. 21)  
nably safe? why then should they fear any disaster? at what occurrence should they be disturbed? Have they not huge reason to say with the *Psalmist*, *In the shadow of thy wings will I rejoyce; The Lord is my strength and my shield, my heart trusteth in him, and I am helped; therefore my heart danceth for joy, and in my Song will I praise him*: May not each of those confiders in God well repress all insurrections of trouble and grief, with that holy charm, *Why art thou so vexed, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me, O trust in God* — *for he is the health of my countenance, and my God*.  
Psal. 42. 14.  
43. 5.

II. We should evermore rejoyce in the practice of Christian hope, making good that aphorism of *Solomon*, *The hope of the righteous shall be gladness*; and obeying those Apostolical injunctions, that we should *rejoyce in hope*; that we should *retain the confidence, and therejoycing of hope firm to the end*. Those excellent and most beneficial truths, those sweet proposals of grace and mercy, those rich promises, which faith doth apprehend as true in a general reference to all Christians, hope doth appropriate, and apply as particularly touching our selves; improving the knowledge of our common capacity into a sense of our special interest in them. God, faith our Faith, will assuredly receive all penitent Sinners to mercy, will crown all pious Christians with glory, will faithfully perform whatever he hath graciously promised to all People, hath a tender care for all that love and fear him; But God, faith our hope, will have mercy on me, will *render to me the wages of righteousness*, will *verify his good word to me his servant*, will protect, will deliver, will bless me in all exigencies: If so, being conscious of our sincere endeavour to serve and please God; if discerning, from a careful reflection upon our heart and ways, that in some good measure with fidelity and diligence we have discharged the conditions required of us, we can entitle our selves to God's special affection, we can accommodate his word to our case, we can assume a propriety in his regard, how can we forbear conceiving joy?

All hope, in proportion to the worth of its object, and the solidity of its ground, is comfortable; it being *the anchor of the soul*, which stayeth and supporteth it in undisturbed rest; it appeasing unquiet desires, it setting absent goods before us, and anticipating future enjoyments by a sweet foretast; Seeing then if we have a good Conscience, and *our heart doth not condemn us*, our hope is grounded *on the rock of ages* (on the immutable nature, and the infallible word of God) seeing it is the hope of the most worthy, the most sublime, the most incomparable and inestimable goods, it must be most extremely delightful.  
Prov. 10. 28.  
Rom. 12. 12.  
Heb. 3. 6.  
2 Tim. 4. 8.  
1 Kings 8. 26.

If it much pleaseth men to conceit themselves next heirs of a fair estate, to have the reversion of a good office, to be probable expectants of a great preferment (although death may intercept, or other accidents may obstruct the accomplishment of such hopes) how much more shall that *lively hope* (of which *St. Peter* speaketh) *of an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us; who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation*, (which hope therefore can never be dashed or defeated) breed a most chearful satisfaction, far transcending all other pleasures, which spring from the most desirable fruitions here; according to that admonition of our Lord, *Notwithstanding in this rejoyce not that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoyce that your names are written in Heaven*.  
Heb. 6. 19.  
Kai μετὰ τὴν παρουσίαν ὑπομένετε τὰς ἀγγελοῦς αὐτῆς ἢ ψυχὴν τῆς ἐλπίδος γαυρομένην δοξάζετε. Const. Ap. 7. 33.  
1 John 3. 31.  
Isa. 26. 4.

III. We should evermore rejoyce in the performing the duty of Charity; both that which we owe to God, and that which is due to our Neighbour.

Love is the sweetest and most delectable of all Passions; and when by the conduct of wisdom it is directed in a rational way toward a worthy, congruous, attainable object, it cannot otherwise than fill the heart with ravishing delight.



And such (in all respects superlatively such) an object is God: He infinitely beyond all other things deserveth our affection, as most perfectly amiable and desireable, as having obliged us by innumerable and inestimable benefits, all the good that we have ever enjoyed, or that we can ever expect, being derived from his pure bounty; all things in the World in competition with him, being pitifully mean, ugly and loathsome; all things without him, being vain, unprofitable; and hurtful to us; so that the *Psalmist* might well say, *Who in Heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I can desire beside thee.* He is the most proper object of our love; for we chiefly were framed, and it is the *prime law* of our nature, to love him; our Soul from original instinct vergeth toward him as its centre, and can have no rest till it be fixed on him; he alone can satisfie the vast capacity of our minds, and fill our boundless desires.

Psal. 89. 6.

Psal. 73. 25.

Matt. 22. 38.

He of all lovely things, most certainly and easily may be attained; for whereas commonly men are crossed in their affection, and their love is embittered from their affecting things imaginary, which they cannot reach, or coy things, which disdain and reject their affection; it is concerning God quite otherwise; for,

John 6. 37.

Psal. 70. 4.

2 Cor. 5. 20.

John 14. 21.

23.

Apoc. 3. 20.

1 John 4. 19.

He is most ready to impart himself, and *will not reject any that cometh unto him*; He most earnestly desireth, and woeth our love; He is not only most willing to correspond in affection, but doth prevent us therein; for *we love him*, (saith the *Apostle*) *because he first loved us.*

Rom. 8. 28.

1 Cor. 2. 9.

He doth cherish and encourage our love by sweetest influences, and most comfortable embraces, by kindest expressions of favour, by most beneficial returns, ordering that *all things shall work together for good to those who love him*: And whereas all other objects do in the enjoyment much fail our expectation, he doth ever far exceed it.

1 Cor. 6. 17.

Acts 11. 23.

Deut. 10. 20.

John 15. 4. 6.

Wherefore in all affectionate motions of our hearts toward God, in desiring him, or seeking his favour and friendship; in embracing him, or setting our esteem, our good-will, our confidence on him; in enjoying him by devotional meditations, and addresses to him; in a reflective sense of our interest and propriety in him; in that mysterious union of spirit, hereby we do closely adhere to him, and are (as it were) inserted in him; in a hearty complacence in his benignity, a grateful resentment of his kindness, and a zealous desire of yielding some requital for it, we cannot but feel very pleasant transports, assuring to us the truth of that saying in the *Psalm*, *They that love thy name shall be joyful in thee*; and disposing us to cry out with the *Psalmist*, *How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O Lord; because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.*

Psal. 5. 12.

Psal. 36. 7.

Psal. 63. 3.

Indeed that celestial flame (kindled in our hearts by the spirit of love) cannot be void of warmth; we cannot fix our eyes upon infinite beauty, we cannot taste infinite sweetness, we cannot cleave to infinite felicity, without we should also perpetually rejoyce in the first daughter of love to God, charity toward men; the which in complection and chearful disposition doth much resemble its mother: For it doth rid all those gloomy, keen, turbulent imaginations and passions, which cloud our mind, which fret our heart, which discompose the frame of our soul; (from burning anger, from storming contention, from gnawing envy, from rankling spite, from racking suspicion, from distracting ambition and avarice.) It consequently doth settle our mind in an even temper, in a sedate humour, in an harmonious order, in that pleasant state of tranquillity, which naturally doth result from the voidance of irregular passions.

1 Cor. 13. 1.

And who can enumerate or express the pleasures which do wait on every kind, on each act of Charity?

How triumphant a joy is there in any-wise doing good? whereby we feed good humour, and gratify our best incinations, whereby we oblige our brethren and endear our selves to them, whereby we most resemble the divine goodness, and attract the divine favour?

2 Cor. 9. 7.

Rom. 12. 8.

St. *Paul* telleth us, that *God loveth the chearful giver*; and he prescribeth, that *he who sheweth mercy*, should do it *in iudicio, with merriness*; And in the



the Law it is commanded, *Thine heart shall not grieve, when thou givest to thy poor brother*; And who indeed can out of charity give alms, or shew mercy, without cheerfulness? seeing that he thereby doth satisfy his own mind, and doth ease his own bowels; considering that in doing good to his neighbour he receiveth far more good to himself; that he then doth put forth his stock to very great and most certain advantage; that he dischargeth an office very acceptable to God, doth much oblige him, and render him a debtor; doth engage him abundantly to requite and reward that beneficence.

What satisfaction is there in forgiving offences; whereby we discharge our souls from vexatious inmates (black thoughts, and rancorous animosities;) whereby we clear our selves from the troubles attending feuds and strifes; whereby we imitate our most gracious Creatour, and transcribe the pattern of our meek Redeemer; whereby we render our selves capable of divine mercy, and acquire a good title to the pardon of our own sins: according to that divine word, *If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you.*

How unconfinedly and inexhaustibly vast is that delight, which a charitable complacence in the good of our neighbour (*a rejoycing with those that rejoyce*) may afford? a man thence engrossing all the good in the World, and appropriating to himself all the prosperous successes, all the pleasant entertainments, all the comfortable satisfactions of his neighbour. Even a charitable sympathy, or condolency, in the adversities of our neighbour, is not destitute of content; for the soul is thereby melted into a gentle temper, susceptible of the best impressions; we share in the comfort, which we minister to others; we are refreshed in that kindly submission to the good pleasure of God, in that lightsome contemplation of God's mercy, in those comfortable hopes of a happy issue, which we suggest to the afflicted; We thence are exposed to a grateful sense of God's goodness, in preserving our selves from those calamities, and in qualifying us to comfort our brethren; We feel satisfaction in reflecting upon this very practice, and observing that we do act conformably to good nature, to the dictates of reason, to the will of God, therein discharging a good conscience, and enjoying a portion of that *continual feast*.

I should, if the time would permit, farther declare how we should find delight in the contemplation of all God's Attributes, of his works, of his word; in thankful resentment of all God's benefits; in willing obedience to all God's Laws; how joy is a proper fruit growing on the practice of humility, of justice, of temperance, of devotion, of every virtue and grace; More particularly I should have evidenced how from a patient submission to God's afflicting hand, from penitential contrition of heart for our sins, from a pious fear and solicitude in working out our salvation, most sweet consolations (so tempering those ingredients, as to render their bitterness very savoury) may spring; But in recommending joy I would not produce grief; and therefore shall not farther annoy your patience.



# S E R M O N XII.

Keep thy Heart with all diligence, &c.

P R O V. iv. 23.

*Keep thy Heart with all diligence, &c.*

**B**EFORE we do apply our selves to inculcate this Precept, it is requisite that we should somewhat explain the terms, and settle the meaning thereof; in doing that, we begin with the last Words, which qualify the action enjoined as to its degree, or extent: *with all diligence*; the words (מְדַבֵּר מְשֻׁמֵּר) answering to these in the *Hebrew*, do, according to the various use, or force of the particle *מ*, admit a threefold acception. They may (1.) denote absolutely the intenseness in degree or extension in kind of the performance required in this Precept: *πάση φυλακῇ τηρε τὴν καρδίαν*, *Omni custodia serva cor tuum*; keep thy heart with all custody, that is, with all sorts or with all degrees of care and diligence; so the *LXX Interpreters*, and the *Vulgar Latin* following them, render those words. They may (2.) taking the particle for a *Mem excellentie*, as they call it, signify comparatively; *præ omni custodia serva cor tuum*; keep thy heart above all keeping; that is, especially and more than thou keepest any other thing; so doth *Pagnin* understand them, not without cause, both for the reason subjoined here, *because from it are the issues of life*; that is, because it is the principal part and fountain of all vital operations, and therefore deserveth the best custody; as also for that in what follows, and in other places of Scripture frequently we are enjoined to keep our tongues from bad discourse, our eyes from wandering after bad objects, our feet from declining to bad courses; and therefore probably in comparison to these, although needful and inferiour custodies, we are admonished to this most especially incumbent custody of our hearts. They may also (3.) and that probably enough be taken so as to denote the universality of the object or matter of this keeping, or the adequate term and bound thereof, keep thy heart, *ἀπὸ παντὸς φυλάγματός*, *ab omni re custodienda*, from every thing which it should be kept from; that is, from every thing offensive or hurtful to it: So did *Aquila* and *Theodotion* translate the words. These senses are all of them good, and each may fairly pretend to find place in the meaning of the words; which of them with most likelihood I shall not discuss, meaning only to insist upon the substance of the precept; the nature of which being duly considered, will infer that it is to be observed according to the manner and measure prescribed, understood according to any of those senses, or according to all of them conjoynly.

As for the meaning of the words; *Keep thy heart*; two enquiries may be made: 1. what the heart is, which *Solomon* adviseth us to keep; 2. what to keep it doth import.

Rom. 7. 22.  
1 Pet. 3. 4.

To the first I answer, that in the stile of Scripture the heart doth commonly import the whole inward man, the *ὁ ἴσως ἀνδρα*, *the man within us*, (as *St. Paul* speaketh) the *ὁ κρυπτός ἡ καρδίας ἀνδρα*, *the hidden man of the heart* (as *St. Peter* calleth it) comprehending all the thoughts and imaginations; all the inclinations and dispositions; all the judgments and opinions; all the passions and affections; all the resolutions and purposes formed within us; in short, all interior, whether tendencies to move, or actual motions of humane Soul. For the Scripture (by the way we may observe it) seemeth to favour that anciently most common and current opinion (embraced by *Aristotle*



the himself, even as true in strict Philosophy, although rejected by most of the latter Schools) that the heart, that material part and principal entrail of the Body, is the chief seat of the Soul, and immediate instrument of its noblest operations. However, because the heart in a man's breast is most inwardly seated, most secluded from sight, guarded from access, fenced from danger, thence whatever is inmost, most invisible, most inaccessible in any thing is called the heart thereof; and all a man's secret thoughts, inclinations, opinions, affections, designs are involved in this name; sometimes all, or divers of them conjunctly are called his heart, sometimes any one of them singly (as there is subject or occasion of using the word) is so termed: Instances in every kind are innumerable many, and very obvious; and therefore I shall not spend time in producing any, but shall suppose that here the word may be understood in its utmost extent, so as to comprehend all the particulars intimated; there being no apparent reason for preferring, or excluding any; all of them being capable of moral quality, both simply and immediately in themselves, and consequentially as they may be the principles of good or bad actions; and because all of them may be, need to be, ought to be the objects of the keeping here enjoined.

But then what is this *keeping*? I answer, that the Word as applied to this matter is especially capable of three senses, each of which may be exemplified.

1. It may imply to observe, that is, to keep it under a constant view, as it were; to mark, or attend unto, to inquire into and study our heart. So, *My son* (saith the wise Man) *give me thy heart, and let thine eyes keep (or observe) my ways*; the same word which here, is there used both in the Hebrew and Greek, and can there well signifie no other custody, but that of attending unto; it being the office of the eye only to look, and observe. Likewise, *Observe* (saith God in the Law) *and hear all these words which I command thee*; that is, hear them very attentively: And so in divers other places.

2. It may also denote the governance, or good management of our hearts; keeping all the motions thereof in due order, within fit compass; applying them to good, and restraining them from bad things: So the Psalmist useth the word, when he saith, *I will keep my mouth with a bridle*; that is, I will so rule and curb it, that no evil language shall issue from it: So when the wise Man adviseth to *keep our feet when we go to the house of God*; by keeping it, he means rightly to guide and order our proceedings; or well to dispose our selves when we address our selves to religious performances: So again, *He that keepeth the fig-tree, shall eat the fruit thereof*; he that keepeth it, that is, he that dresseth and ordereth it to advantage for bearing fruit.

3. Again, keeping may be taken for preserving, guarding, securing from mischief or damage: which indeed is the most common use of the word; and therefore we need no instancing to countenance it.

Now any of these senses may be intended here, or all of them together; and they indeed are in the nature of the thing so coherent, or so mutually dependent one on the other, that any one of them can hardly be practised without the rest: For without heedfully observing our heart we cannot well govern it; and an ill-governed heart cannot easily be attended to; and without both watchful observation, and skilful management of it, we cannot guard it from evil; and reciprocally without guarding it, we cannot well rule it, or duly mind it: such a complication there is in practice of these three custodies.

I shall at present only discourse concerning the first of them, which seems in the nature of things, and according to our method of acting to precede. According to this exposition, when 'tis said, *Keep thy heart with all diligence*, we may understand it, as if each of us were thus advised: With a most constant and wary care observe all the interior propensions and motions of thy soul; whatever is done, or designed within thee; whither thy desires lean, what thy affections are stirred by, to what thy judgment of things doth lead thee, with greatest attention and assiduity mark and ponder it.

It is a peculiar excellency of humane nature, which seemeth more to distinguish a man from any inferior rank of creatures, than bare reason it self, that he can reflect upon all that is done within him, can discern the tendencies of his soul, is acquainted with his own purposes; some shadows of other rational

ope-



operations are discoverable in beasts, and 'tis not easie to convince them, who from plausible experiments do affirm them sometimes to syllogize; but no good reason or experience can (I suppose) make it probable, that they partake of this reflexive faculty; that they do ever regard, or remark upon their own imaginations; they seem always to march directly forward with a blind impetuosity toward some pleasing object, without attending to the fancy that guides them, or the appetite which excites them: neither indeed do they seem to need any such power in order to the preservation of their life, or gratifying of their sense, which are the main ends they were designed and fitted for. But man being designed by his Maker, disposed by the frame of his nature, and obliged by a Law imposed on him, not to follow casual impulses from exteriour objects, nor the bare conduct of his imagination, nor the sway of his natural propensities, but to regulate as well the internal workings of his soul, as his external actions according to certain Laws or Rules prescribed him; to settle his thoughts upon due objects, to bend his inclinations into a right frame, to constrain his affections within due bounds, to rectify his judgments of things, to ground his purposes upon honest reasons, and direct them unto lawful matters; it is needful, that he should have this power of discerning whatever moveth or passeth within him; what he thinks upon, whither he inclines, how he judgeth, whence he is affected, wherefore he doth resolve; without this power he could not be a moral agent, not able to perform any duty, not properly subject to any Law, not liable to render an account of his doings: Did he not perceive his own thoughts, how could he dispel them, when they are bad, or vain? might he not observe his own inclinations, how could he strive to restrain them, or to reform them, when they draw to unlawful practices? were he not sensible of his affections, how could he endeavour to reduce or compose them, when they become exorbitant or tumultuous? were he not conscious of his own opinions, how could he weigh, and examine them; how could he conform his actions to them, or practise according to the dictates of his conscience? 'tis therefore plainly needful that man should be endued with this power, for that without it he can neither perform the duty required of him, nor enjoy the benefits he is capacised, and designed for: Our Maker therefore hath conferred it upon us, our duty consists in its right use, our advantage ariseth from the constant and careful exercise of this excellent faculty: Constant and careful, I say: *constant*, for observation implies so much; for, if ever we shut our eyes, or turn our heads aside, what we look to may be gone; much therefore will pass away undiscerned and unobserved by us; especially such quick and fleeting things as are the interior motions of our soul will escape; wherefore a continual vigilancy is requisite to a keeper of the heart; It must also be *careful*, as the keeper of a thing so nimble and slippery must not sleep, so he must not slumber; he must not be oscitant, but very intent upon his charge; superficial glances upon the outward face, as it were, of the soul will not suffice; to *observe* is with earnest care to look through the matter; to discern whatever lurketh therein, to pierce into the very depth and bottom of it, to spy through every nook and corner therein; otherwise 'tis but slightly viewed rather than truly observed; especially so subtle, so intricate, so obscure a thing as a man's heart is requireth an extraordinary application of mind in observing it with judgment and fruit.

This is then our duty, recommended by the Wise Man, to be continually with extream diligence, looking inward upon our selves, observing what thoughts spring up within us, what imaginations find most welcome harbour in our breasts, what objects most affect us with delight, or displeasure (what it is that we love and readily embrace; what we distast and presently reject) what prejudices do possess our minds; wherefore we propose to our selves such undertakings; conversing with our selves, and as it were discoursing in this manner: What is it that I think upon, are my thoughts serious, seasonable, and pure? Whither do I propend; are my inclinations compliant to God's Law, and good reason? What judgments do I make of things; are my apprehensions clear, solid, sure, built upon no corrupt prejudice? What doth most easily stir me, and how is my heart moved; are my affections calm, and orderly, and well placed? What plots do I contrive, what projects am I driving on;



on; are my designs good, are my intentions upright and sincere? let me thoroughly enquire into these points, let me be fully satisfied in them; thus should we continually be doing. The holy Scripture doth often bid us to judge our selves, to examine our works; to search and try; to weigh, to heed, to watch over our ways: *If* (saith St. Paul) *we would judge* (discern, or distinguish) *our selves, we should not be judged*; that is, we should avoid those miscarriages, which bring the divine judgments upon us: and, *Let us* (saith the Prophet Jeremey) *search and try our ways, and turn unto the Lord*; and, *I said I will take heed to my ways* (saith the Psalmist); and, *Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established*, is the *Wise Man's* advice: Search our ways, and ponder our paths, this implies, that we first do examine, and weigh our hearts; for there our ways begin; thence is motion derived to our feet, and to our hands also: All our actions depend as effects of them, all do receive their moral quality thence: Whatever in our doings is good or bad *ἐξωθεν* Mark 7. 23: *ἐκπορεύεται*, doth (as our Lord expresseth it) issue from within us; our actions are but streams sweet or bitter, clear or foul, according to the tincture they receive at those inward sources of good or evil inclinations, of true or false judgments, of pure or corrupt intention; there consequently we are principally obliged, to exercise the scrutiny and trial required of us.

Socrates is reported to have much admired that Verse in *Homer*,

*Ὅτι τοὶ ἐν μεγάλῃσι κακόντ' ἀγαθόντε τέτυκται.*

Gell. XIV. 6.

affirming that in it the sum of all Wisdom is comprized: the sense and drift thereof being this, as he took it: Seek and study what good or bad is at home, within thy house; see how all goes in thy breast; employ thy chief inquiry upon the affairs of thy soul; there confining thy curiosity and care.

Such is the duty; and the practice thereof is of huge profit and use; bringing many great benefits and advantages with it; the neglect of it is attended with many grievous inconveniences and mischiefs, and for perswading to the one, dissuading from the other, I shall propound some of them, such as are most obvious, and offer themselves to my meditation.

The most general, and most immediate advantage arising hence is this, that by such a constant and careful inspection, or study upon our hearts, we may arrive to a competent knowledge of, and a true acquaintance with our selves (a most useful knowledge, a most beneficial acquaintance) neither of them being otherwise attainable. *The heart* (as you know the Prophet says) *is deceitful above all things*; and, *who* (adds he) *can know it*? who can know it: none it seems, but God that made it; and the man that hath it: he that hath it, must, I say, be able competently to know it; even in regard to him the question may intimate some difficulty, but it doth not denote an absolute impossibility: Hard it may be for us to know the heart by reason of its deceitfulness; but the sleight imposture, if narrowly looked into, may be detected: 'Tis a very subtle and abstruse, a very various and mutable thing; the multiplicity of objects it doth converse with, the divers alterations it is subject to, from bodily temper, custom, company, example, other unaccountable causes; especially its proneness to comply with, and to sute its judgments of things unto present circumstances without, and present appetites within do render it such; wherefore it is not indeed easie to know it; but yet possible it is; for under severe penalties we are obliged not to be deceived by it; or, which is all one, not to suffer it to be deceived: *Let no man* (saith St. Paul) *deceive himself*: See that ye be not deceived, saith our Saviour: *Take heed* (saith Moses) *to your selves, that your heart be not deceived*; such Precepts there are many, obliging us to know our hearts, and to discover the fallacies put on them, or upon us by them; carrying with them directions how to compass it; that is, by looking about us, and taking heed; (by careful circumspection and caution.) It is therefore a feasible thing to avoid being imposed upon, and well to understand our selves: But as other abstruse pieces of knowledge, so this especially cannot be attained without industrious applications of our mind, and constant observations, to find the corners wherein the deceit lurks; we must pursue its secret windings and intrigues; we must trace it step by step, (as Hunters do wild Beasts) into the utmost recesses of its first desires, and most deeply radicated prejudices; we must do as *David* did, when he *strove*

1 Cor. 11. 31.  
Gal. 6. 4.  
ἑαυτὸς  
δυναμὶς  
Lam. 3. 40.  
Psal. 39. 1.  
Prov. 4. 26.

Jer. 17. 9.

1 Cor. 3. 18.  
Luke 21. 8.  
Deut. 11. 16.

Psal. 77. 6, 10.



strove to free himself from distrust and impatience in his straits: *I communed with my own heart* (saith he) *and my spirit made diligent search*; by which practice he found, as he farther acquaints us, that it was *his infirmity*, which moved him to doubt of God's mercy and benignity toward him. *Cicero* having somewhere commended Philosophy as the most excel-

*Hac enim una nos cum ceteras res omnes, tum quod est difficillimum docuit, ut nosmet ipsos nosceremus. Cic. de Leg. 1.*

lent gift by Heaven bestowed upon man, assigns this reason; *because it teaches us, as all other things, so especially this of all most difficult thing, to know our selves*: but he,

with his favour, doth seem to promise for his friend more than she is able to perform; the main part of this knowledge doth lye beyond the reach of any particular method; the Empirick seems to have more to do here than the Doctor: Philosophy may perhaps afford us some plausible notions concerning the nature of our soul; its state, its power, its manners of acting; it may prescribe some wide directions about proceeding in the discovery of our selves; but the particular knowledge (and therein the chief difficulty lieth) of our selves, how our souls stand inclined and disposed, that only our particular earnest study, and assiduous observation can yield unto us; and it is an inestimable advantage to obtain it. All men are very curious and inquisitive after knowledge, the being endued therewith passeth for a goodly ornament, a rich possession, a matter of great satisfaction, and much use: Men are commonly ashamed of nothing so much as ignorance; but if any knowledge meriteth esteem for its worth and usefulness, this next to that concerning Almighty God, may surely best pretend thereto; if any ignorance deserveth blame, this certainly is most liable thereto; to be studious in contemplating natural effects, and the causes whence they proceed; to be versed in the writings and stories of other mens doings; to be pragmatikal observers of what is said or done without us (that which perchance may little concern, little profit us to know) and in the mean while to be strangers at home, to overlook what passeth in our own breasts, to be ignorant of our most near and proper concernments, is a folly, if any, to be derided, or rather greatly to be pitied, as the source of many great inconveniences to us. For it is from ignorance of our selves that we mistake our selves for other Persons than we really are, and accordingly we behave our selves toward our selves with great indecency and injustice; we assume and attribute to our selves that which doth not any-wise belong unto us, or become us: As put case we are ignorant of the Persons we converse with, as to their quality, their merit, their humour; we shall be apt to miscall, and mistake them; to misbehave our selves in our demeanour toward them; to yield them more or less respect than befits them; to cross them rudely, or unhand somely to humour them: In like manner, if we be strangers to our hearts, shall we carry our selves toward our own selves: We shall hence, like men in a frenzy, take our selves for extraordinary People, rich and noble, and mighty, when indeed our condition being duly estimated, we are wretchedly mean and beggarly. We do frequently hug our selves (or rather shadows in our room) admiring our selves for qualities not really being in us; applauding our selves for actions nothing worth; such as proceed from ill principles, and aim at bad ends; when as did we turn our thoughts inwards, and regard what we find in our hearts, by what inclinations we are moved, upon what grounds we proceed, we should be ashamed, and see cause rather to bemoan, than to

Rev. 3. 17.

*Ut nemo in se sentiat descendere, nemo.*

Luke 18. 7.

*Ἐάντων ἐαυτοὺς ἀπαλαῖν, καὶ οἷον εἶναι τι εὐδὲν ὄντα, ὑπὸ τῇ μακρῇ δόξῃς φουσιάζον.* Nazianz. Orat. 27.

bless our selves: Descending into our selves we might perchance discern that most of our gallant performances (such as not considering our hearts we presume them to be) are derived from self-love, or pride; from desire of honour, or love of gain; from fear of damage or discredit in the World, rather than out of love, reverence, and gratitude toward God, of charity, compassion, and good-will toward our brethren, of sober regard to our own true welfare and happiness; which are the only commendable principles, and grounds of action: St. Luke telleth us of certain men, who *perswaded themselves that they were righteous, and despised others*; upon occasion of whom our Saviour dictateth the Parable of the *Pharisee* and *Publican*; whence, think we, came that fond confidence in themselves, and proud contempt of others? from ignorance surely of themselves, or from not observing those bad dispositions, those wrong opinions, those corrupt fountains within, from whence their supposed righteous deeds did



did flow. *If any man* (saith St. Paul, giving an account of such presumptions) Gal. 6. 3. *thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, εαυτὸν φρεναπαλά he cheats him- Πεδ: εαυτὸν* *self in his mind; but let every man examine his work, and then he shall have re- μόνον.* *joycing in himself alone* (or, privately with himself); some, he implieth, do impose upon, and delude themselves, imagining themselves some-bodies, (indued forsooth with admirable qualities, or to have atchieved very worthy deeds) when as, if they would enquire into themselves, they should find no such matter; that themselves were no such Men, and their Works no such Wonders: But if (saith he) a Man doth δοκιμάζεν εαυτὸ τὸ ἔργον, implore and examine what he doeth, and in result thereof doth clearly perceive, that he acteth upon good reasons, and with honest intentions, then may he indeed enjoy a solid interiour satisfaction (a true καύχημα, or exultation of mind) whatever others, not acquainted with those inward springs of his motion, do please to judge of him, and his proceedings. No man indeed can truly value himself, or well approve of his own doings, so as to find any perfect comfort in himself, or in them, who doth not by studying himself discover whence, and why he acts: One may be a flatterer, but cannot be a true friend to himself, who doth not thoroughly acquaint himself with his own inward state; who doth not frequently consult, and converse with himself: A friend to himself, I said, and to be so is one of the greatest benefits that humane life can enjoy; that which will most sweeten and solace our life to us: friendship with others (with persons honest and intelligent) is a great accommodation, helping much to allay the troubles, and ease the burthens of life; but friendship with our selves is much more necessary to our well-being: for we have continual opportunities and obligations to converse with our selves; we do ever need assistance, advice and comfort at home: and as commonly 'tis long acquaintance, and familiar intercourse together, which doth conciliate one man to another, begetting mutual dearness and confidence, so it is toward ones self: As no man can be a friend to a mere stranger, or to one whose temper, whose humour, whose designs he is ignorant of; so cannot he be a friend to himself, if he be unacquainted with his own disposition and meaning; he cannot in such a case rely upon his own advice, or aid, when need is; but will suspect, and distrust himself; he cannot be pleasant company to himself, but shall be ready to cross, and fall out with himself; he cannot administer consolation to his own griefs and distresses; his privacy will become a desertion, his retirement a mere solitude. But passing over this general advantage, I shall with some more minuteness of distinction consider divers particular advantages accruing from the practice of this duty, together with the opposite inconveniences, which are consequent upon the neglect thereof, in the following Discourse.

— patria quis exul se quoque fugis?  
Αυτὸς σεαυτὸν, χρὴ συμμέλω, καὶ τῷ  
δῶ. Naz. Epist. 60.

Ἐνίοι καὶ ἑαυτοὺς βίον ὡς ἀτερπὲς αὐτὸν  
δίμα προσιδόντες ἐκ ὑπομνήσεων, ἐδ' ἀναλάσσει τὸ λογισμὸν ὡς φῶς ἐφ' ἑαυ-  
τὸς καὶ σεαυτὸν ἀλλ' ἢ ψυχὴν γέμισα  
κακῶν παντοδαπῶν, καὶ φετ' ἔτι καὶ  
σοβαρὴν τὰ ἔκδον. Ἰμπηδὸν δὲ δύσχε, &c.  
Plut. de Curios. p. 916.

## S E R M O N XIII.

*Keep thy Heart with all diligence, &c.*

PROV. IV. 23.

*Keep thy Heart with all diligence, &c.*

**I** Proceed to the particular advantages of the practice of this duty, and the inconveniences of the neglect of it.

I. The constant and careful observation of our hearts will serve to prevent immoderate self-love, and self-conceit; to render us sober and modest



in our opinions concerning, and in our affections toward our selves; qualifying us to comply with the Apostolical Precept, *μη περὶ ἑαυτοῦ ἰδέσθαι*, that is, not to overween, or overvalue our selves, and our own things: for he that by serious inspection upon his own heart, shall discern how many fond, impure, and ugly thoughts do swarm within him; how averse his inclinations are from good, and how prone to evil; how much his affections are misplaced, and distempered (while he vehemently delights in the possession, and impotently frets for the want of trifles, having small content in the fruition, and but slender displeasure for the absence of the greatest goods; while empty hopes exalt him, and idle fears deject him; while other various passions, like so many tempests, drive, and toss him all about) who shall observe, how clouds of darkness, error and doubt do hover upon the face of his soul; so that he quickly taketh up opinions, and soon layeth them down, and often turneth from one mistake unto another; how unsettled his resolutions are, especially in the pursuance of the best goods; and what corrupt mixtures cleave to his best purposes; who taketh notice how backward he is unto, and how cold in devotions toward God, how little sensible of his goodness, or fearful of his displeasure, or zealous for his honour, or careful of performing his duty toward him; how little also it is that he desireth, or delighteth in the good, that he pitieth and grieveth at the evil of his neighbour; how sluggish also and remiss he is in the pursuance of his own best affairs, and highest concerns; he that doth, I say, frequently with heedfulness regard these imperfections and obliquities in his own heart, how can he be ravished with self-love? how can he be much taken with himself? can any man dote upon such deformity, admire such weakness and naughtiness? no surely; That men are so amorous of themselves, so haughty and arrogant in their concerns, doth constantly arise from not reflecting on their own hearts; not beholding themselves wisely enough in that mirror; not considering according to just representation there how little lovely, or worthy they are: If they did practise that, they would see reason, and thence become inclinable rather to despise, to loath, to pity themselves.

*Leniter ex merito quicquid patiare ferendum est.* Ovid. Ep. 5.

Ezra 9. 13.

Psal. 103. 10.

Lam. 3. 22.

Gen. 32. 10.

2. Upon that advantage is consequent, that this practice will dispose us with equanimity, and patience to bear all crosses and grievances befalling us; so producing not only an excellent virtue, but a considerable solace to us; for the being conscious of so much unworthiness, which observation of our heart will necessarily discover, will not only justify the providence, (so removing all just cause of complaint) but will commend the benignity of God unto us (so administering good matter of thanks.) It will prompt us heartily to confess with those in *Ezra*, that *our punishments are less than our deservings*; to joyn in acknowledgment with the *Psalmist*, that *God hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities*; to say with *Jeremy*, *It is of the Lord's mercy, that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not*; with *Jacob*, *I am less than any of thy mercies*.

3. Particularly this Practice will fence us against immoderate displeasure occasionable by Mens hard opinions, or rash censures passed on us: For he that by inquiry into himself perceives so many defects in himself, will not so easily, nor so greatly be offended, if some of them (or some like to them) be objected to him; since he finds himself truly liable to many more, and greater. *Epictetus* his advice is, when you are told, that any Man speaks ill of you, that you should not apologize, but answer only that he was ignorant of many other faults of yours, or he would not only have mentioned those: To be disposed, without dissembling or affection, to follow his counsel, would argue a man very intelligent of himself, and well prepared to endure happily and handsomely encounters of this kind, which every man shall be sure to meet with. None indeed can so contentedly brook reproach, or blame, as he that by intimate acquaintance with his own heart doth know the censure passed on him to be in effect mild and favourable; as finding himself a witness of more faults, than any adversary can accuse him of; as being a stricter examiner, and severer judge of himself, than the most envious eye, or disaffected mind can be. It is also some comfort, that if censures be very outrageous, a Man by knowledge of himself (by knowing his own dispositions, if his person be disfigured by a very ill character; by knowing his own purposes, if his actions be grievously



voufly aspersed) is certain they are such; that he can be as well a faithful witness, and just Judge for himself, as against himself.

4. Likewise this practice will defend us, as from the discomforts of harsh censure, so from the mistakes and miscarriages, to which the more favourable opinions of Men, or their flattering expressions (those luciferous poisons) may expose us.

— *Nil est quod credere de se  
Non possit, cum laudatur* —

*Index ipse sui se totum explorat ad unguem  
Quid proceres, vanique ferat quid opinio vulgi  
Securus*

'Tis not only true of great men, but even of all men: The common nature of men disposeth them to be credulous, when they are commended, or receive any signification of esteem from others: Every ear is tickled with this *ἡδὺν ἀκρόαμα*, this sweet musick of applause: But we are not to relye upon others imperfect and ill-grounded judgment so much as upon our own more certain knowledge concerning our selves:

— *ne cui de te plus quam tibi credas.*

Take no man's word before thine own sense, in what concerns thine own case and character, is an advice deserving our regard and practice: For that a man in questions of this kind is able to be a skilful and indifferent Umpire between himself and others; that he is neither elevated, nor depressed in mind by external weights, but keepeth himself equally poised in a just consistence by his own well-informed conscience; that neither his heart is exasperated with the bitterest gall of reproach, nor his head intoxicated with the sweetest wine of flattery, is an invaluable convenience of life; or rather it is a virtue arguing a most strong and healthful constitution of soul. *How great a levity of mind, how great a vanity is it (saith a good Father) setting aside a*

*man's own conscience to follow other mens opinions (and even that feigned and forged) to be snatched away by the wind of false praise, to rejoyce in being circumvented, and to receive being mocked for a benefit? From being thus abused, this practice alone can secure us: If we know our selves well, we cannot so easily be deluded by the mistakes of others concerning us, on either hand.*

*Qua hac tanta levitas est animi, qua tanta vanitas relicta propria conscientia alienam opinionem sequi? & quidem fictam, atque simulatam: rapi venio falsa laudationis, gaudere ad circumventionem suam, & illusionem pro beneficio accipere? Hier. (vel Paulinus) ad Celant.*

5. Likewise, farther upon the same this practice will conduce to qualifie our opinions, and moderate our passions toward others; so that without intemperate anger, or bitterness, we may bear the faults, errors, and infirmities of our brethren; that we shall be benign in our carriage, and gentle in our censures even toward them, who do not behave themselves so well and wisely as they should do. St. Paul thus admonisheth the *Galatians*, *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual (the more spiritual whether in truth, or in our own esteem, the more especially are we obliged hereto) restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thy self, lest thou may be also tempted: σκοπῶν σεαυτὸν*, looking upon, or spying into thy self; such considering our selves, taking notice of our own infirmity within, perceiving how subject we are to the impressions of temptation, and that hence it may be our own case to fall and faulter, if occasion concur with our weakness; discerning this, I say, as it will be a reason obliging, so it may be an instrument conducing to a mitigation of spirit toward those, whom we see overtaken with mistake, or overborn by frailty. *Why dost thou see a mote in thy brothers eye, but dost not consider the beam in thine own eye?* is our Saviour's question; why a man should do so, there cannot (as he implies) any good reason be assigned; 'tis a very unreasonable and inexcusable miscarriage) but whence a man doeth so, is obvious and plain: it is, because he curiously pryeth into other mens doings, and carelessly neglecteth the observation of his own heart: Did we reflect our sight inwards, we should be more apt to mark our own faults, and less ready to discover those of others; or however we should be more gently affected in regard to them: For he that knows himself a beggarly Wretch, will he reproach poverty to another? He that consulting the glass doth find himself ill-favoured, will he upbraid another for want of grace or beauty? He that perceives that the dart will rebound, and thereby wound himself, will he not be careful of flinging it? Will a man be forward in pronouncing a heavy sentence against another, who considers himself by plain consequence involved in the

Gal. 6. 1.

Marc. Ant. X7.

18.

Matt. 7. 2.



Rom. 2. 1.

2 Sam. 12.

Si volumus equi rerum omnium iudices  
esse, hoc primum nobis suadeamus, neminem  
esse nostrum sine culpa. Sen. de Ir.  
Συγγραμμὴ ἐφ' ἡ δίδουσι πᾶσι τοῖς  
ἀμαρτάνουσι, πλὴν ἑαυτῶν. Cato Maj.  
Plut. p. 624.

condemnation thereof? Should a man do so, he doth at least render himself incapable of apology, or excuse: So we are told by St. Paul: *Every censurer* (πᾶς ὁ κενύων) *is, saith he, inexcusable; for that in arraigning another he condemns himself*: guilty is he of inexcusable folly, or impudence; of folly and blindness, if he see not; of extream impudence, if seeing his own obnoxiousness he will not abstain from judging others for that, of which himself is guilty in the same kind, or equivalently in some other. You know how David was caught by Nathan, and unwarily adjudged himself to death: And so may every man expose himself, that is rigorous in censure toward others without reflecting on himself, and considering his own heart; wherein he shall find so much ground and matter of being angry with, and judging himself. If we

will be fierce and keen, 'tis reason we should be so first, and chiefly there, where our greatest enemies do abide, whence most mischief ariseth to us; where there is fittest matter, and justest cause of passion: Thus is this practice a most proper and effectual remedy for those baneful vices of pride and peevishness in our selves, of malignity and fury toward others. But farther,

6. The observation of our heart yieldeth great advantage in being very conducive to render men truly wise and prudent; in those things especially, which most nearly concern them: Giving them to see before them, and to understand what they do; and to proceed without security; as contrarily the neglect thereof rendreth men unadvised and uncertain in their doings. A main point of prudence consisteth in suiting a man's undertakings to his powers and capacities; in not attempting things surpassing his ability, or fitness; and in not declining such useful, or beneficial attempts, as he may well compass. Some are overbold and rash in setting upon things beyond their strength to accomplish, or skill to manage; whence commonly with shame and sorrow they are defeated in their enterprizes; Others are overbackward and diffident, so as not to adventure upon what they may with good advantage, or perhaps ought to perform; thence depriving themselves of the benefits they might obtain, or omitting the duties, which they are obliged to; both which inconveniences usually do proceed from the not looking into, and studying the heart; for the most and greatest impediments of action do lye there; being grounded upon inward indispositions, or disagreeableness of mens temper, capacity, inclination to the matters, to which they apply themselves: A tender foot will be galled and lamed, if you set it going in rugged paths; a weak head will turn, if you place it high, or upon the brink of a precipice; a soft spirit cannot well comport with boisterous employment; he that naturally affects calm and quiet, must not hope to come off well, if he engage himself upon affairs exposed to abundance of care and tumult; nor will he if he be well studied this way, and rightly understand himself, adventure thereupon. It was as well according to wisdom, as modesty, that David could say: *My heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty, neither do I exercise my self in great matters, or in things too high for me.* In every undertaking two things occur to be considered, what of difficulty is found therein, and what of temptation; whether it can be done, and whether it should be done: It is a folly to spend our care and pains upon that, which is too hard for us to effect, and 'tis worse than so to adventure upon that, which most probably will bring us into sin, and hurt our souls; only the study of our selves, weighing our power, and trying our temper, will prevent both: He that doeth this may commonly foresee what, the case being put, he shall do; that if such a temptation doth assault him in such circumstances, his inclinations will be apt to comply therewith, and he shall scarce be able to resist; (that, for instance, he shall wax haughty in a state of dignity, become luxurious in abundance of wealth, be distracted with care in a busie employment) and therefore he will not be so forward to ingage himself upon such occasions; danger and mischief being so vividly pre-represented to his sight. But he that pondereth not his own heart is ready to presume, that be the business what it will, he shall come off well; and so unadvisedly rusheth into the snare; he assumes unweildy burthens upon his shoulders, which he soon feeleth sorely to oppress and pain him; which he can neither bear with ease,

Psal. 113. 1.



ease, nor put off with convenience; When, for instance, the Prophet told *Hazael* what Cruelties and Rapines, should (when he got power and opportunity) be committed by him; you see how he was startled at the report: *am I a Dog*, saith he; that is, can I be so vile and base; Yes, he might himself have perceived that he should in likelihood be so; the probability of his doing as the Prophet said, had been no great news to him, if he had observed his own inclinations. Good *Agur* on the other side did better understand himself, when he prayed; *Give me neither poverty nor riches, but feed me with food convenient for me*; he was conscious of natural infirmity, and therefore afraid of being in a condition that might prevail upon it; of great wealth, lest it should tempt him to forgetfulness, and neglect of God (*lest*, (saith he) *I be full and deny thee, and say who is the Lord?*) of extream want, lest it should put him upon unjust, dishonest and impious courses to maintain his life; (*lest*, adds he, *I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain*;) he saw, by looking into himself, that self-love (the root of pride and injustice) was potent in him, and formidable, when occasion should favour it, and therefore by imploring divine aid, he strove to decline the advantages and occasions of it. It was good counsel with *Xenophon* tells us the Oracle gave *Cræsus*, consulting about the success of his attempt against *Cyrus*, *Σαυρόν γινώσκων διδάσκειν Κερίσει πενήτειας*. *Knowing thyself thou shalt pass on happily* (in the course of thy life and undertakings;) had he, considering his own ability, in relation to the dubious event of things (that as he could not promise himself good fortune, so he did not know how he should comport with bad; being not sure that he should overcome either his enemies, or himself) thus, I say, had he complied with the Oracle's advice, he might have escaped the loss and sorrow which befell him. So is it with us; if we know not the burthen of our Vessel, we shall either put more sail to it than it can bear, or less than will suffice to carry it on, it will be overladen, or want fit balast: If we are ignorant of our capacities, we shall either soar too high with a dangerous confidence, or grovel below in a sluggish listlessness: Studying our selves will help to preserve us in a middle pitch, will direct us in a moderate course, wherein we may proceed with sufficient courage and alacrity; with a prudent foresight, or at least with a comfortable hope of good success.

7. Near to that lies another considerable benefit, attending this practice, which is, that it will help to render us expedite in our resolutions, and constant to them; consistent with our selves, and uniform in our proceedings; whence will arise both great convenience to our selves, and satisfaction to others with whom we deal or converse: As on the contrary side, from the neglect thereof we shall become slow in deliberation, doubtful in resolution, and unstable in performance. When any occasion of acting is presented, we shall be ready to close with what is agreeable to our inclination, and not repugnant to our judgment, if by due study and experience we are acquainted with them; that acquaintance is a certain preparation to a speedy choice; and we shall upon the same grounds constantly adhere to our choice, standing upon so firm a base; and so shall neither discompose our selves, nor disappoint others by our irresolution and inconstancy. But he that skills not his own heart, first will dwell long upon consultation (not feeling perfectly whither his inward Bias doth draw him) and when he seems upon some superficial reason to have determined on one side, some discordance to his own inclination, or some latent prejudice soon discovering it self, he wavers, and at length falls off; finding that he hath promised to himself or others what he is unable or unwilling to perform; so like St. *James* his two-souled man, he is unsteady in all his ways. The hard Student of himself is like a man that hath his Estate in *numeratione*, in ready Cash, all in his hand, or at his command; he can presently tell what he can do, and satisfy those he hath to do with; go to him, you may know where to have him, even just where you left him, or where he uses to be; you may expect a sudden dispatch, and you may rely upon his word; for he knows before-hand what he doeth, and shall continue to like; why he determines so or so; and cannot be removed from his well-grounded purpose, (that which is by the Philosopher termed *ratio nec dissidens, nec hesitans*, a *Sen. de vit. B. 8.* reason that doth not strive, nor stick, he is master of.) But he that neglects this

2 Kings 12. 8.

Prov. 30. 8.

De Cyri Instit.

Jam. 1. 8.

Sen. de vit. B. 8.



Sen. Ep. 20.

this practice, what he hath any title to, lieth dispersed, and laid up in corners unknown to himself, so that himself cannot come readily by it; you can hardly tell where to find him; you must wait his resolution, and when 'tis told you, you cannot be assured thereof; nor any-wise satisfied that he will stick to his word, or his mind; he knows not thoroughly what he would have himself, can you then hope for a certain answer from him? He cannot well trust himself, can you then rely upon him? He will find himself mistaken and crossed in his own choice, can you expect less? *Quid est sapientia? semper idem velle, atque idem nolle*: Constancy to a Man's self is, saith he, the very being of Wisdom; however nothing more befits a Man, more commends him to society, and suits him to business, is more pleasant and grateful to those who have to do with him, than such a clear, uniform, steady disposition of mind; such a smooth and even tenour of action; nothing renders conversation and commerce more unpleasant, than a fickle lubricity of humour, and unaccountable deformity of behaviour: That study therefore is very useful, which conduceth to breed and maintain the one, and which removeth the other.

Ecclef. 7. 14.

3 John 1. 2.

8. Again, another valuable convenience of this practice is, that it disposeth unto, and preserveth a Man's mind in a soft temper, agreeable to his state, and to the circumstances into which he is cast; such a temper I mean as that, which the *Wise Man* prescribes, where he saith, *In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider*. It is apt to beget either a comfortable joy, or a wholesome regret, according as the interior condition of his soul (that wherein the chief cause of the one or of the other affection, is grounded) doth seasonably and justly require. To be transported with mirth and jollity in a state of grievous misery, when reason it self demands sorrow and pity; to be sad and dumpish when all things flow prosperously, either of those will seem marvellously incongruous, and argue a kind of stupidity in him that so behaves himself. Now there is not in truth any calamity so disastrous as that which befalls us within our selves, no Prosperity so worthily delightful as the good proceeding of affairs in our souls: 'Tis the most excellent pleasure a Man is capable of, that which doth spring from the being conscious, that his mind doth *do well* (as St. *John* speaks) that is, go well forward in a happy course; that good thoughts freely do spring up, that good inclinations are strong and prevalent, that good habits of mind wax vigorous; that the love of goodness is improved; that he generally doth thrive in health and strength spiritual: No increase of treasure can affect the covetous, no rising in power and dignity can satisfy the ambitious, no enjoyment of sensual entertainments can ravish the voluptuous man with so true or great content, as the sensible proficiency in virtuous and pious dispositions of soul, growing *richer unto God*, and stronger in the hopes of his favour do produce in him that doth affect it, and can perceive it: 'Tis a joy in all respects incomparable; only wise and reasonable, pure and innocent, firm and durable. As on the other hand if it be so that we discern, that within our hearts bad thoughts do swarm and multiply, bad appetites do sway, bad customs do encroach upon us; that desire of, and delight in good things decay; that we become more dark, dull, unsettled in our spiritual apprehensions, more feeble and languid in our prosecutions of virtue, 'tis a great benefit to have a timely remorse prompting and urging us to endeavour a deliverance from so unhappy a condition: But no man can well either enjoy that comfortable delight, or be affected with this profitable sorrow, who doth not with a careful attention view his heart, and descry how things go there. This consideration mindeth of a farther and more general advantage accruing from this practice; which is this, that

Matt. 15. 18.

9. A serious inspection into our hearts doth much avail toward the reformation of our hearts and lives; curing the distempers, and correcting the vices of them. For to the curing any disease it is requisite to know the complexion and temper of the Patient, and the part affected, and the next causes thereof: As the most grievous of bodily diseases are seated in, or do proceed from the entrails; but not all of them from the same one of them; and the same disease depends upon the distemper sometimes of one, sometimes of another among them: So do all vices (as our *Saviour* expressly teacheth) issue from the heart, or interior man; some from one, some from another



another part or region thereof; and the same from different parts: Sometimes natural temper, sometimes false opinion, sometimes evil custom is the root of the same kind of disease; and 'tis expedient we should know distinctly which of them in particular cases is the root, that accordingly we may understand what method of cure to use, whence to fetch the remedy, where to apply it; for unskillfulness in these points may frustrate our endeavours of amendment. If the mischief proceed from natural inclination, we must not hope ever utterly to subdue it, nor to free our selves suddenly from the incursions thereof; nor is bare reasoning a proper Weapon against it; it being grounded in the original constitution of the soul, either immediately, or as linked to the body; which by no operation of our mind can be soon altered; for, *No wisdom* (as *Seneca* speaketh well) *can remove the natural vices of body or mind; what is infused and inbred may be allayed by art, not subdued.*

*Nulla sapientia naturalis corporis, aut animi vitia ponuntur: quicquid infusum & ingentum est leniter arte, non vincitur.*  
Sen. Ep. 11.

Reason alone and directly, is not able to grapple therewith; she'll break her teeth upon so tough and knotty matter: It will weary her arms in vain to swim against the rapid current of natural propension; the violent eruptions thereof may indeed somewhat be restrained; occasions of complying therewith may often be declined; it may in time, and by degrees, be weakened by subtracting the food and incentives thereof: But especially Devils of this kind must, as our Saviour instructeth us, be ejected by humble, earnest and frequent invocation of divine assistance; without which other means commonly will prove ineffectual: But if the vice proceed only from ill habit, or the prevalency of bad custom, we are to oppose a contrary custom thereto, presently disusing that practice, and acting otherwise, so shall we easily remove and extirpate it: If neither of these causes are discernable, we may presume our indisposition is derived from ill opinion; and that consequently our best course of redressing it, is to examine the reason of the thing; to get clear and right apprehensions concerning it. For example, if we observe our selves apt to be frequently transported with anger, let us look into our hearts, and take notice, whether the root of that distemper be a cholerick complexion, or whether it arise from an habitual indulgence to our selves of being moved upon slight causes, whereby a peevish humour is grown upon us; or whether it cometh from vain conceits of our selves, as of Persons unto whom extraordinary deference and observance is due, so that no man should presume to dissent from our opinion, or contravene our desire; and as we find, so we must respectively proceed in repressing the causes of this disease; praying, if it arise from nature, to the Omnipotent (the only Lord and Commander of nature) that he would by his grace free us from that inflammable temper, and enable us to govern our passion; withal shunning occasions of being provoked; abstaining from such diet, such business, such company, as naturally do kindle or ferment that humour: If the Malady grow from custom, using our selves to bear patiently harsh words, unkind dealings, cross accidents; if our opinion dispose us thereto, reasoning our selves into moderate conceits about our selves, considering the reasons that may acquit or excuse others to us upon occasion of offence: Using all, or some of these means, or the like, such as the observation of our heart shall discover to us to be most proper and suitable to the nature, or to the cause of this distemper infesting us, we shall wholly, or in good part rid our selves from it. Again, (to adjoin another example, the matter seeming to deserve our heed) suppose we experience our selves inclining to covetousness; eager in getting, solicitous in keeping, unwilling to part with our goods upon reasonable occasion (for the maintenance of our convenient respect in the World, or for relieving the needs of our Brethren, or for serving the publick, or for promoting the interests of Piety and Virtue) let us then look, and see whether this ariseth from a natural straitness, hardness, suspiciousness, or diffidence of Heart (some such dispositions may be observed in men) or from being by our Education, or manner of life enured to such a love of getting, or of sparing, or of tenacity; or whether it springs from conceits about the worth, or the necessity of wealth (that without being furnished with heaps of treasure, we shall come into danger of want or disgrace; we shall not be able to maintain our life, or uphold our credit; we shall not enjoy

*Τί οὐδέποτε τὸ  
ἐξ ὧν ἐκείνη  
τὴν ἐξ ὧν  
ἐπὶ αὐτῆς*



enjoy any thing, or be any bodies among men) let us, I say, by examining our hearts find out from which of these springs this sordid disposition floweth, and accordingly strive to correct it; either praying to Almighty God, that he would enlarge and supple our heart, if it be natural to us; or addicting our selves upon reasonable occasion to liberality and free expence, if custom hath therein prevailed upon us; or, if vain surmises have seduced us, rectifying our judgments; as by other good discourses, proper against that brutish vice, so especially by considering that God is most good and bountiful, and tender of our being overwhelmed with need; that he continually watcheth over us, so that he cannot but see, and will regard what we want; and that he faithfully hath promised, if we endeavour to please him, and use a moderate diligence in honest ways to maintain our selves, that he will yield his blessing, and never will leave us destitute. So in all cases we may proceed discreetly in the cure of our spiritual, and in withstanding the temptations to sin, that assault us, if we do but search into our hearts, and learn thence, whence they flow, and by what they are nourished.

10. This practice farther, doth particularly serve to regulate our devotions, and performances more immediately spiritual; by shewing us what we need to pray for, what we are obliged to give thanks for, what it becomes us to confess, and deprecate, for want thereof we shall be apt not only to neglect, but indecently to confound, yea miserable to pervert these duties; to confound them by praying for what is already given us, is put into our hand, or lies within our reach; for which therefore we are not to pray, but to render thanks; also by giving thanks formally for that, which perhaps we are far from possessing, and do most want; so, I say, we shall be apt to confound and misplace, to render vain and chimerical in a sort our spiritual addresses, as wanting due ground and object; yea to pervert them by asking for things really prejudicial and hurtful to us (in the circumstances we stand) and thanking God for what in anger and judgment he dispenseth to us (so indeed are many appearing goods, grateful to present sense) as also deprecating things most beneficial and useful, and healthful to our souls; neglecting to return thanks for what God disposeth in mercy (so are many things at present bitter, and unfavoury to our carnal appetite and fancy) thus from ignorance of our selves, and what we truly need, are we apt to pervert our devotions, not only defeating our selves of the advantages they might yield us; but (if God be not more gracious than to hearken to us, and to grant our wishes) bringing lamentable mischief on our selves. Many examples of these confusions and perverse misapplications of devotion both Scripture affords, and experience will suggest, if we observe them. You know the comparison in the *Gospel* between the devotions of the *Pharisee* and the *Publican*, with the different acceptance they found: The one was prompt enough to give thanks for the graces he had received, and the advantages he conceived that he had in his qualities, and in his performances above others; but not having duly studied himself; did not perceive, that he was rather bound to ask pardon for the pride of his heart, and the vanity that adhered to his performances, which rendered his thanksgiving very improper and unseasonable: The other being conscious of his demerits and wants, with a manner suitable to his condition, in words few, but full and fit, did confess his unworthiness (which to do did best beseech him) and implored mercy (which was the thing he chiefly needed) so was his discreet Prayer better accepted, than the others impertinent thanksgiving: *I tell you* (saith our Saviour) *this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.* The two Sons of *Zebedee*, conceiving that our Lord would shortly become a great Prince, and affecting to become Favourites then, did confidently sue for the next place of dignity about him; our Lord repressed their fond ambition by downright telling them first that *they knew not what they asked*; then by demanding of them whether they were able to undergo the trials they should meet with; implying what they should rather have requested; that they more needed humility and patience, than pomp and pleasure: And it was the same two persons, whose intemperate zeal he elsewhere checked with an *ex edate eis πνευματι, Ye know not of what spirit ye are:* And no wonder, if they who knew not what they were, did ask they knew not what; that being ignorant

Psal. 73. 18.

Heb. 12. 11.

Evertere domos

totas optantibus

ipsis

Dii faciles, &c.

Juv. Sat. 10.

Luke 18.

Luke 18. 14.

Matt. 20. 21.

Luke 9. 55.



ignorant of their own hearts, they should endite absurd petitions; that in such a case they should desire things not only incongruous and inconvenient, but dangerous and destructive to themselves. For to make a right distinction of these duties; to be able discreetly and pertinently (if I may so speak) to converse with God; it is requisite to look into our hearts; and from them to take fit matter, due measure, right season of request, and of acknowledgment respectively; things commonly not being as they appear to our present sense, or to our gross conceit, in themselves, or in their degree good or bad; but according to the disposition of our hearts, and the effects they work upon them: That is not good, which pleaseth our sense and fancy, nor that bad, which disgusts them; but that is good, which rendereth our heart wiser and better; which correcteth our inclinations, composeth our affections, informeth our judgments rightly, and purifieth our intentions; that is bad, which hath contrary effects within us. We it's likely should pray with greatest seriousness and earnestness for the removal of those infirmities, for ease from those afflictions, which we see the Holy *Apostles* (being better instructed in things, being more acquainted with themselves) did rejoyce, did glory in, did give thanks for; as finding the wholesome operations they had upon their hearts: (that by them their virtues were exercised, and improved, their faith tried, their patience increased, their hope confirmed; that, (to use the *Apostles* Words) they did in the sequel return the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who were exercised by them; but leaving this Point, though deserving perhaps farther consideration, I proceed, and say farther, that

11. The continual visitation of our inward parts doth not only yield much advantage, (as in some measure hath been shewed) at the long-run by influence at the spring-head upon the principles and causes of action, but doth immediately conduce to good practice, preventing and stifling in the very birth many sinful and vain practices: That so many indiscreet and impertinent, so many irregular and unfavoury, so many unjust and uncharitable speeches do issue from our mouths, it is especially because we are not then employed upon this duty; are not watching over our hearts, and observing those inward fountains (levity and wantonness of thought, precipitancy and disorder of passion) from whence they overflow; were we intent there, we should perhaps endeavour to stop the current, and contain these inward bad motions from venting themselves. The like we may say concerning many unwarrantable actions, into which we inconsiderately plunge our selves, not heeding whence they spring: Did we regard that such actions were arising from ambitious, covetous, froward dispositions; or from certain ill-grounded prejudices lurking in our minds, we should often surely forbear them; but while we keep none, or bad sentinels; while in the custody of our hearts we sleep, or are drowsie; while we neglect to examine and weigh our actions what they are, and whence they come, they (although very bad and hurtful) do steal by us, and pass as friends, and we hear no more of them, but in their woful consequences. What efficacy the consideration of God's omnipresent eye, beholding all our doings, hath, and how all wise men do press it as a powerful means to contain us from bad action, you cannot but well know; as likewise that some of them in order to the same purpose direct us to conceive our selves always under the inspection of some person especially venerable for his worth, or for his relation to us, whom we should be afraid, or ashamed to displease: And surely were the faith concerning God's presence, or the fancy concerning the presence of a *Cato*, or a *Laelius* strong enough, they could not but have great effect: However did we but live even in our own presence, under the eye of our own judgment and conscience; regarding not only the matter and body, but the reason and ground (that is the soul) of our actings; even that would do much; the love and reverence of our selves would somewhat check and controll us; we should fear to offend, we should be ashamed to villify even our selves by fond or foul proceedings: It would (in the Philosophers esteem) supply the room of any other Keeper or Monitor, if we could thus keep our selves: If (saith he) *we have so far profited, as to have got a reverence of our selves, we may then well let go a Tutor, or Pedagogue.*

VOL. III.

Q

12. This

*Cum jam profeceris tantum, ut sis tibi  
otium tui reverentia, libere dimittas peda-  
gogum. Ibid.*

Jam. 1. 2.  
Rom. 5. 3.  
2 Cor. 12. 9.  
Gal. 6. 14.  
1 Pet. 1. 6.  
Heb. 12. 11.

Sen. Ep. 11.

25.

Sen. Ep. 25.



12. This practice doth much conduce to the knowledge of humane nature, and the general dispositions of mankind, which is an excellent and most useful part of Wisdom: For the principal inclinations and first motions of the soul are alike in all men; whence he that by diligent study of himself hath observed them in his own soul, may thence collect them to be in others; he hath at least a great advantage of easily tracing them, of soon descrying them, of clearly perceiving them in those he converseth with; the which knowledge is of great use, as directing us how to accommodate our selves in our behaviour and dealing with others.

No Man indeed can be a good Instructor or Adviser in Moral Affairs, who hath not attained this Skill, and doth not well understand the nature of Man: His Precepts and Rules will certainly be fallacious, or misapplied without it: This is that, which rendered the Dictates of the *Stoicks* and other such Philosophers so extravagant and unpracticable, because they framed them not according to the real nature of Man, such as is existent in the World, but according to an Idea formed in their own Imaginations.

Some Caution indeed is in this matter to be used, that those motions of Soul, which proceed from particular Temper and Complexion, from supervenient Principles or Habits, may be distinguished from those which are natural and common unto all: Which distinction to make is of great use and benefit, in order to the governing, restraining or correcting them.

If there be any in us, which are not observable in any other men; or in other men, which are not in us, those do not arise from common nature, but from the particular disposition of one or other respectively.

13. I add lastly, that universally this Practice is requisite and necessary for the well-governing of our Heart. Politicians inculcate much, that to the well-governing of a People, squaring fit Laws for it, and keeping it in good order, the nature and humour of that People should be chiefly heeded and well understood, for that the grave *Romans*, and light *Greeks*; the soft *Persians*, and stout *Germans*; the subtle *Africans*, and gross *Scythians* would not be well managed in the same manner. So to govern any man's heart (since the hearts of men, as their faces, and as their voices, differ according to diversities of complexion, of age, of education, of custom and manner of living) it conduceth to know how it is disposed from any of those, or the like causes. (But how we are to guide and govern our hearts, and what particular influence this practice hath thereupon, I reserve for other Meditations; when we shall endeavour more distinctly to shew how we may apply our thoughts to due objects; how curb and correct our inclinations; how order our passions; how rectify our opinions; how purify our intentions; now) I conclude with the good

*Vid. Naz.  
Orat. 1.*

*Psal. 86. 11.*

*Psal. 119. 34.*

*Psal. 139. 23.*

*Psalms's Requests to God Almighty: Teach us thy way O Lord, unite our hearts to fear thy name. Give us understanding, and we shall keep thy Law, yea we shall observe it with our whole heart. Search us O God, and know our hearts; try us, and know our thoughts; see if there be any wicked way in us, and lead us in the way everlasting. Amen.*



## SERMON XIV.

## The Consideration of our Latter End.

P S A L. XC. 12.

*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

**T**HIS *Psalm* is upon several peculiar accounts very remarkable; for its antiquity, in which it perhaps doth not yield to any parcel of Scripture; for the eminency of its Author, *Moses* the Man of God; the greatest of the ancient Prophets (most in favour, and (as it were) most intimate with God:) 'Tis also remarkable for the form and matter thereof, both affording much useful instruction. In it we have a great Prince, the Governour of a numerous People, sequestering his mind from the management of publick Affairs to private Meditations; from beholding the present outward appearances, to considering the real nature and secret causes of things: In the midst of all the splendour and pomp, of all the stir and tumult about him, he observes the frailty of humane condition, he discerns the Providence of God justly ordering all; this he does not only in way of wise consideration, but of serious devotion, moulding his observations into pious acknowledgments, and earnest prayers to God; thus while he casts one eye upon Earth viewing the occurrences there, lifting up the other to Heaven; there seeing God's all-governing Hand, thence seeking his gracious favour and mercy. Thus doth here that great and good Man teach us all, (more particularly Men of high Estate, and much Business) to find opportunities of withdrawing their thoughts from those things, which commonly amuse them, (the Cares, the Glories, the Pleasures of this World) and fixing them upon matters more improveable to devotion; the transitoriness of their Condition, and their subjection to God's just Providence; joyning also to these Meditations suitable acts of Religion, due acknowledgments to God and humble prayers. This was his practice among the greatest encumbrances that any man could have; and it should also be ours. Of those his devotions, addressed to God, the Words are part, which I have chosen for the subject of my meditation and present discourse; concerning the meaning of which I shall first touch somewhat; then propound that observable in them, which I design to insist upon.

The Prophet *David* hath in the 39th *Psalm* a Prayer very near in words, and of kin (it seems) in sense to this here; *Lord*, prays he, *Make me to know my end, and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am*: Concerning the drift of which place, as well as of this here, it were obvious to conceive, that both these Prophets do request of God; that he would discover to them the definite term of their life (which by his decree he had fixed, or however by his universal prescience he did discern; concerning which we have these words in *Job*, *Seeing man's days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds, that he cannot pass*) we might, I say, at first hearing be apt to imagine, that their Prayer unto God is, (for the comfort of their mind burthened with afflictions, or for their better direction in the management of their remaining time of life) that God would reveal unto them the determinate length of their life. But this sense, which the Words seem so naturally to hold forth, is by many of the Fathers rejected; for that the knowledge of our lives determinate measure is not a fit matter of Prayer to God; that being a secret reserved by God to himself; which to inquire into favours of presumptuous curiosity; the universal validity



of which reason I will not debate; but shall defer so much to their judgment, as to suppose that the numbring of our days (according to their sense) doth here only imply a confused indefinite computation of our days number, or the length of our life; such as, upon which it may appear, that necessarily our life cannot be long (not according to the account mentioned in this *Psalm*) the same with that of *Solon*, in *Herodotus* (above 70 or 80 Years, especially as to purposes of health, strength, content) will probably by reason of various accidents, to which it is exposed, be much shorter (7 or 10 Years according to a moderate esteem) may possibly, from surprises undiscoverable, be very near to its period; by few instants removed from death (a Year, a Month, a Day, it may be somewhat less.) This I shall allow to be the *Arithmetick* that *Moses* here desires to learn; whence it doth follow that teaching (or making

Οὐ γὰρ ἐξορένας ἔχοντες ἀνθρώπου  
ἀγνοεῖν ὅτι ἀνθρώπος ἐστὶν καὶ ὅτι θνήσκει  
καὶ ὅτι γέγονεν εἰς τὸ ἀνδάνειν. *Plut.*  
*ad Apoll. p. 202.*

Quis est tam stultus, quamvis sit ado-  
lescens, cui sit exploratum se vel ad vespere-  
rum esse victurum. *Cic. de Sen.*

to know, so it is in the *Hebrew*) doth import here (as it doth elsewhere frequently in Scripture) God's affording the Grace to know practically, or with serious regard to consider this state and measure of our life (for in speculation no Man can be ignorant of humane lives brevity and uncertainty; but most Men are so negligent and stupid, as not to regard it sufficiently, not to employ this knowledge to any good purpose). This Interpretation I chuse, being in it self plausible enough, and countenanced by so good authority; yet the former might well enough (by good consequence, if not so immediately) serve my design: or be a ground able to support the discourse I intend to build upon the Words; the subject whereof briefly will be this, That the consideration of our lives certain and necessary brevity and frailty, is a mean proper and apt to dispose us toward the wise conduct of our remaining life; to which purpose such a consideration seems alike available, as the knowledge of its punctual or definite measure; or more than it; upon the same, or greater reasons.

As for the latter clause, *that we may apply our hearts to wisdom*; 'tis according to the *Hebrew*, and we shall bring the heart to wisdom; implying, the application of our hearts to wisdom to be consequent upon the skill and practice (bestowed by God) of thus computing our days. As for *wisdom*, that may denote either *sapience*, a habit of knowing what is true; or prudence, a disposition of chusing what is good; we may here understand both, especially the latter; for, as *Tully* saith of Philosophy, *Omnis summa Philosophiae ad beatè vivendum refertur*, The sum or whole of Philosophy refers to living happily; so all Divine Wisdom doth respect good practice. The word also comprehends all the consequences and adjuncts of such wisdom (for so commonly

*De fin. II. p.*  
*95.*

Natura dedit usuram vitæ, tanquam pecunia, nulla prestituta die. *Tusc. quest. I.*  
*p. 326.*

such words are wont by way of *metonymie* to denote, together with the things primarily signified, all that naturally flow from, or that usually are conjoined with them) in brief (to cease from more explaining that, which is in it self conspicuous enough) I so understand the Text, as if the Prophet had thus expressed himself: Since, O Lord, all things are in thy hand, and sovereign disposal; since it appears that man's life is so short and frail, so vexatious and miserable; so exposed to the just effects of thy displeasure; we humbly beseech thee, so to instruct us by thy wisdom, so to dispose us by thy grace; that we may effectually know, that we may seriously consider the brevity and uncertainty of our lives durance; whence we may be induced to understand, regard, and chuse those things which good reason dictates best for us; which according to true wisdom, it most concerns us to know and perform. From which sense of the words we might infer many useful documents, and draw matter of much wholesome discourse; but passing over all the rest, I shall only insist upon that one point, which I before intimated, *viz.* that the serious consideration of the shortness and frailty of our life is a proper instrument conducive to the bringing our hearts to wisdom, to the making us to discern, attend unto, embrace and prosecute such things as are truly best for us; that it is available to the prudent conduct and management of our life; the truth of which proposition is grounded upon the divine Prophet his opinion: He apprehended such a knowledge or consideration to be a profitable means of inducing his heart to wisdom; wherefore he prays God to grant it him in order

to



to that end; supposing that effect would proceed from this cause. And that it is so in way of reasonable influence I shall endeavour to shew by some following reasons.

I. The serious consideration of our lives frailty and shortness will confer to our right valuation (or esteem) of things, and consequently to our well placing, and our duly moderating our cares, affections and endeavours about them. For as we value things, so are we used to affect them, to spend our thoughts upon them, to be earnest in pursuance or avoiding of them. There be two sorts of things we converse about, good and bad; the former, according to the degree of their appearance so to us (that is, according to our estimation of them) we naturally love, delight in, desire and pursue; the other likewise in proportion to our opinion concerning them, we do more or less loath and shun. Our actions therefore being all thus directed and grounded, to esteem things aright both in kind and degree (*ἐν δέσσει ἀποδιδόναι τὴν ἀξιαν*, to assign every thing its due price, as *Epictetus* speaks; *quanti quidque sit judicare*, to judge what each thing is worth, as *Seneca*;) is in order the first, in degree a main part of wisdom; and as so is frequently by wise men commended. Now among qualities that commend or vilifie things unto us; duration and certainty have a chief place; they often alone suffice to render things valuable or contemptible. Why is Gold more precious than Glass or Chrystal; why prefer we a Ruby before a Rose, or a Gilly-flower? 'tis not because those are more serviceable, more beautiful, more grateful to our senses than these (it is plainly otherwise) but because these are brittle and fading, those solid and permanent; these we cannot hope to retain the use or pleasure of long; those we may promise our selves to enjoy so long as we please; whence on the other side is it, that we little fear or shun any thing how painful, how offensive soever, being assured of its soon passing over, the biting of a flea, or the prick in letting blood? The reason is evident; and that in general nothing can on either hand be considerable (either to value or disesteem) which is of a short continuance. Upon this ground therefore let us tax the things concerning us whether good or bad, relating to this life, or to our future State; and first the good things relating to this life; thence we shall be disposed to judge truly concerning them, what their just price is, how much of affection, care and endeavour they deserve to have expended on them. In general, and in the lump concerning them all *St. Paul* tells us, that *τὸ γῆμα τὸ κόσμος παρέρχεται*, the shape or fashion (all that is apparent or sensible) in this present world doth flit, and soon gives us the go-by: We gaze a while upon these things, as in transitu, or intra conspectum; as they pass by us, and keep a while in sight; but they are presently gone from us, or we from them. They are but like objects represented in a Glass; which having viewed a while, we must shortly turn our backs, or shut our eyes upon them, then all vanishes, and disappears unto us. Whence he well infers an indifferency of affection toward them; a slackness in the enjoyment of them to be required of us; a using this world, as if we used it not; a buying, as if we were not to possess; a weeping, as if we wept not; and a rejoicing, as if we rejoiced not; a kind of negligence and unconcernedness about these things. The world (saith *St. John*) passeth away, and the desire thereof; whatever seemeth most lovely and desirable in the World is very flitting; however our desire and our enjoyment thereof must suddenly cease. Imagine a man therefore possessed of all worldly goods, arm'd with power, flourishing in credit, flowing with Plenty, swimming in all delight (such as were sometime *Priamus*, *Polycrates*, *Crasus*, *Pompey*) yet since he is withal supposed a man and mortal; subject both to fortune and death; none of those things can he reasonably confide, or much satisfy himself in; they may be violently divorced from him by fortune, they must naturally be loosed from him by death; the closest union here cannot last longer than till death us depart; wherefore no man upon such account can truly call or (if he consider well) heartily esteem himself happy; a man cannot hence (as the most able judge, and trusty voucher of the commodities doth pronounce) receive profit or content from any labour he taketh (upon these transitory

*1 John 1. 17. Love not the world; for the world passeth away, and the desire thereof.*

*Primum est, ut quanti quidque sit judicet; secundum, ut impetum ad illa capias ordinatum temperatumque; tertium, ut inter impetum tuum, actionemque conveniat, ut in omnibus istis tibi ipse consentias. Sen. Epist. 89.*

*1 Cor. 7. 31.*

*πάντα παρέρχεται ἡμᾶς, Ἐὶ ὃ μὴ, ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ πάντα παρέρχονται. Gr. Epig. Anthol.*

*1 John 2. 17. Ἐπιθυμία αὐτῆς.*

*Ecc. 1. 3, &c.*



Commorandi  
natura nobis di-  
versorium dedit  
non habitandi  
locum. Cic. de  
Sen.  
1 Pet. 2. 11. 1.  
Heb. 13. 11.  
11. 15.  
1 Chron. 29.  
15.  
Job 14. 1.  
Psal. 78. 39.  
Jam. 4. 14.  
Isa. 64. 6.  
Psal. 102. 3.  
90. 5. 9. 103.  
15. 39. 5.  
144. 4. 119.  
19.  
Psal. 103. 15.  
Isa. 40. 6.

tory things) *under the sun*. Why then (let me inquire) do we so cumber our heads with care, so rack our hearts with passion, so waste our spirits with incessant toil about these transitory things? why do we so highly value, so ardently desire, so eagerly pursue, so fondly delight in, so impatiently want, or lose, so passionately contend for and emulate one another in regard to these bubbles; forfeiting and foregoing our homebred most pretious goods, tranquillity and repose, either of mind or body, for them? Why erect we such mighty fabricks of expectation and confidence upon such unsteady sands? why dress we up these our Inns, as if they were our homes, and are as careful about a few nights lodging here, as if we designed an everlasting abode (we that are but *sojourners and pilgrims* here, and have no fixed habitation upon earth; who come forth like a flower, and are soon cut down; flee like a shadow and continue not; are winds passing away, and coming not again; who fade all like a leaf, whose life is a vapour appearing for a little time, and then vanishing away; whose days are a hand-breadth, and age is nothing; whose days are consumed like smok, and years are spent as a tale. Who wither like the grass, upon which we feed; and crumble as the dust, of which we are compacted; for thus the Scripture by apposite comparisons represents our condition) yet we build (like the Men of *Agrigentum*) as if we were to dwell here for ever; and hoard up, as if we were to enjoy after many ages; and inquire, as if we would never have done knowing? The Citizens of *Croton* (a Town in *Italy*) had a manner (it is said) of inviting to Feasts a Year before the time, that the Guests in appetite and garb might come well prepared to them; do we not usually resemble them in this ridiculous solicitude and curiosity; *spes inchoando longas*, commencing designs; driving on projects, which a longer time than our life would not suffice to accomplish? How deeply do we concern our selves in all that is said or done; when the morrow all will be done away and forgotten? when (excepting what our duty to God, and charity towards men requires of us, and that which concerns our future eternal state) what is done in the World, who gets or loses, which of the spokes in fortune's wheel is up, and which down, is of very little consequence to us. But the more to abstract our minds from, and temper our affections about these secular matters, let us examine particularly by this standard, whether the most valued things in this World deserve that estimate which they bear in the common Market, or which popular opinion assigns them.

1 Pet. 2. 4.

Psal. 62. 9.

Isa. 14. 17.

1. To begin then with that which takes chief place, which the World most dotes on, which seems most great and eminent among men; secular state and grandeur, might and prowess, honour and reputation, favour and applause of men, all the objects of humane pride and ambition: of this kind, St. Peter thus pronounces *πᾶσα δόξα ἀνθρώπων, All the glory of men is as the flower of the grass; the grass is dried up, and the flower thereof doth fall off*; 'tis as the flower of the grass, how specious soever, yet the most fading and failing part thereof; the grass it self will soon wither, and the flower doth commonly fall off before that. We cannot hold this flower of worldly glory beyond our short time of life; and we may easily much sooner be deprived of it: Many tempests of fortune may beat it down, many violent hands may crop it, 'tis apt of its self to fade upon the stalk; however the sun (the influence of age and time) will assuredly burn and dry it up, with our life that upholds it. Surely (saith the Psalmist) *men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lye*: Men of high degree; The mighty Princes, the famous Captains, the subtle Statesmen, the grave Senatours; they who turn and tosse about the World at their pleasure; who, (in the Prophet's language) *make the Earth tremble, and shake Kingdoms*: Even these, they are a lye; (said he, who himself was none of the least considerable among them, and by experience well knew their condition, the greatest and most glorious Man of his time, King David.) They are a lye; that is, their state presents something of brave and admirable to the eye of Men; but 'tis only *deceptio visus*; a shew without a substance; it doth but delude the careless spectators with false appearance; it hath nothing under it solid or stable; being laid in the balance (the royal Prophet there subjoyns; that is, being weighed in the scales of right judgment, being thoroughly considered) it will prove lighter than vanity it self; it is less valuable than mere emptiness,



ness, and nothing it self; that saying sounds like an *hyperbole*, but it may be true in a strict sense: Seeing, that the care and pains in maintaining it, the fear and jealousie of losing it, the envy, obloquy and danger that surround it, the snares it hath in it, and temptations inclining men to be pufft up with Pride, to be insolent and injurious, to be corrupted with pleasure (with other bad concomitants thereof) do more than countervail what-ever either imaginary worth or real convenience may be in it. Perhaps could it without much care, trouble and hazard continue for ever, or for a long time, it might be thought somewhat considerable; but since its duration is uncertain and short; since *man in honour abideth not, but is like the beasts that perish*; that they who look so like Gods, and are called so, and are worshipped as so, yet must die like men (like men, yea like sheep shall be laid in the grave;) Since, as 'tis said of the King of Babylon in *Esay*: *their pomp must be brought down to the grave, and the noise of their viols; the worm shall be spread under them, and the worm shall cover them*; seeing that a moment of time shall extinguish all their lustre, and still all that tumult about them; that they must be disrobed of their Purple, and be cloathed with Corruption; that their so spacious and splendid Palaces must soon be exchanged for close daksome Coffins; that both their own breath, and the breath of them who now applaud them must be stopped; that they who now bow to them, may presently trample on them; and they who to day trembled at their presence, may the morrow scornfully insult upon their memory: *Is this the man* (will they say, as they did of that great King) *who made the Earth to tremble; that did shake Kingdoms; that made the World as a Wilderness; and destroyed the Kingdoms thereof?* Since this is the fate of the greatest, and most glorious among Men, what reason can there be to admire their condition; to prize such vain and short-liv'd preeminences? For who can account it a great happiness to be styled and respected as a Prince, to enjoy all the Powers and Prerogatives of highest dignity for a day or two; then being obliged to descend into a sordid and despicable estate? Who values the fortune of him that is brought forth upon the Stage to act the Part of a Prince; though he be attired there, and attended as such; hath all the garb and ceremony, the ensigns and appurtenances of Majesty about him; speaks and behaves himself imperiously; is flattered and worshipped accordingly; yet, who in his heart doth adore this Idol; doth admire this mockery of greatness? Why not? because after an hour or two the Play is over, and this Man's reign is done. And what great difference is there between this and the greatest worldly state? between *Alexander* in the History, and *Alexander* on the Stage? Are not (in the *Psalmist's* account) *all our years spent as a tale that is told*; or, as a Fable, that is acted? This in comparison of that, what is it at most, but telling the same story, acting the same Part a few times over? What are a few years more than a few hours repeated not very often? not so often as to make any considerable difference; so a great Emperor reflected; *τί διαφέρει το μέγεθος τερρελώς* what (said he) doth the age of an infant, dying within three days, differ from that of Nestor, who lived three ages of men; since both shall be past and ended; both then meet, and thereby become equal; since considering the immense time that runs on, and how little a part thereof any of us takes up (*juvenes & senes in equo sumus*) we are all alike young and old; as a drop and a Pint bottle in compare to the Ocean are in a sort equal, that is, both altogether inconsiderable. *Quid enim diu est, ubi finis est?* saith St. *Austine*: *what can be long that shall be ended*; which coming to that pass is as if it never had been? Since then upon this account (upon worldly accounts, I speak all this; and excepting that Dignity and Power may be Talents bestowed by God, or advantages to serve God, and promote the good of Men; excepting also the relation Persons justly instated in them bear to God as his Deputies and Ministers; in which respects much reverence is due to their Persons, much value to their Places; even the more, by how much less their present outward Estate is considerable, and because at present they receive so slender a reward for all their cares and pains employed in the discharge of their Offices; this I interpose to prevent mistakes, lest our discourse should seem to disparage, or detract from the reverence due to persons in eminent Place. But since, under this

Psal. 82. 6.

Psal. 49. 12.

Isa. 14. 11.

Isa. 14. 16.

Psal. 90.

Anton. IV. 50.

Sen. Ep. 99.

24.

*Mibi ne diuturnum quidem quidquam videtur, in quo est aliquid extremum, &c.*  
Cic. de Senect.



this caution) all worldly Power and Glory appear so little valuable, the consideration hereof may avail to moderate our affections about them; to quell all ambitious desires of them, and all vain complacencies in them. For why should we so eagerly seek and pursue such empty shadows, which if we catch, we in effect catch nothing; and whatever it is, doth presently slip out of our hands? Why do we please our selves in such evanid dreams? Is it not much better to rest quiet and content in any station wherein God hath placed us, than to trouble our selves and others in climbing higher to a Precipice, where we can hardly stand upright, and whence we shall certainly tumble down into the grave? This Consideration is also a remedy, proper to remove all regret and envy grounded upon such regards? For why, though suppose Men of small worth, or virtue should flourish in Honour and Power, shall we repine thereat? Is it not as if one should envy to a Butterfly its gaudy Wings, to a Tulip its beautiful colours, to the Grass its pleasant verdure; that Grass, to which in this *Psalm* we are compared; *which in the morning flourisheth, and groweth up, in the evening is cut down and withereth*? I may say of this discourse with the *Philosopher*, ἰδιωτικὸν μὲν, ὁμῶς δὲ ἀντικατὰ βολήματα, 'tis a homely remedy (there may be divers better ones) yet hath its efficacy; for *David* himself made use thereof more than once: *Be not, saith he, afraid* (or troubled) *when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away, his glory shall not descend with him. I was* (saith he again) *envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked; but I went into the sanctuary, then understood I their end; surely thou didst set them in slippery places—how are they brought into desolation as in a moment*: Thus considering the lubricity and transitoriness of that Prosperity, which foolish and wicked Men enjoyed, did serve to cure that envious distemper, which began to affect the good man's Heart.

2. But let us descend from Dignity and Power (that is, from names and shews) to somewhat seeming more real and substantial, to Riches; that great and general Idol, the most devoutly adored that ever any hath been in the World; which hath a Temple almost in every House, an Altar in every Heart; to the gaining of which most of the thoughts, most of the labours of Men immediately tend; in the Possession of which Men commonly deem the greatest Happiness doth consist. But this consideration we discourse about, will easily discover, that even this, as all other Idols, is *nothing in the World*, nothing true and solid; Will (I say) justify that advice and verifie that assertion of the *Wise-man*: *Labour not for riches, wilt thou set thy heart upon that which is not?* it, well applied, will pluck down the high places reared to this great Idol of Clay in Mens Hearts; will confute the common Conceits and Phrases, which so beautifie Wealth; shewing that whoever dotes thereon is more truly and properly styled a miserable Man, than a happy, or blessed one: For is he not indeed miserable, who *makes lies his refuge*, who confides in that which will deceive and disappoint him? The *Prophet* assures us so: *Woe* (saith the *Prophet Habbakkuk*) *woe be to him, who coveteth an evil covetousness to his house; that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil*: Men (he implies) imagine by getting Riches, they have secured and raised themselves above the reach of all mischief: But ye see it was in the *Prophet's* judgment a woful mistake. *St. Paul* doth warn Men (very emphatically) *not to hope ἐπὶ πλεῖσι ἀδυνασίᾳ, in the uncertainty* (or obscurity) *of riches*; intimating, that to trust in them, is to trust in darkness it self; in that wherein we can discern nothing; in we know not what? They are, we cannot but observe, subject to an infinity of chances, many of them obvious and notorious; more of them secret and unaccountable: *They make* (the *Wise-man* tells us) *themselves wings* (they need it seems no help for that) *and fly away like as an eagle toward heaven* (quite out of sight, and beyond our reach, they of their own accord do swiftly fly away) however, should they be disposed to stay with us, we must fly from them; were they inseparably affixed to this life, yet must they together with that be severed from us; as we came naked of them into this World, so naked shall we return: *As he came, saith the Preacher, so shall he go; and what profit* (then) *hath he that laboureth for the wind?* From hence, that we must so soon part with riches, he infers them

to



to be but wind; a thing not any wise to be fixed or settled; which 'tis vain to think we can appropriate, or retain; and vain therefore greedily to covet, or pursue: So the *Psalmist* also reasons it: *Surely, every man* (saith he) *walketh in a vain shew; surely they are disquieted in vain; he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.* Men, in his account, that troubled themselves in accumulating Wealth, did but idly delude themselves, fancying to receive content from such things, which they must themselves soon be separated from; and leave at uncertainties, to be disposed of they know not how: That which in his wise Son's esteem was sufficient to make a man hate all his labour under the sun: *Because,* saith he, *I shall leave it to the man that shall be after me, and who knoweth, whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet he shall have rule over all my labour, wherein I have laboured; and wherein I have shewed my self wise under the sun:* All it seems, that we are so wise, and so industrious about; that we so beat our heads about, and spend our spirits upon, is at most but *gaudium heredis*, the joy of an heir, and that an uncertain one (for your Son, your Kinsman, your Friend may for all you can know die before you, or soon after you) 'tis but a being at great pains and charges in tilling the Land, and sowing and dressing it; whence we are sure not to reap any benefit to our selves, and cannot know who shall do it.

*In his elaborant, qua sciunt nihil omnino ad se pertinere; sicut arbores qua alteri seculo proficiunt. Cic. de Senect.*

*The rich man* (St. James tells us) *as the flower of the grass shall he pass away; for the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion thereof perisheth; So also shall the rich man fade in his ways;* all the comfort (we see by the *Apostle's* discourse) and the convenience, all the grace and ornament that riches are supposed to yield will certainly wither and decay, either before, or with us; whenever the sun (that is, either some extream mischance in life, or the certain destiny of death) doth arise, and make impression on them. But our *Saviour* hath best set out the nature and condition of these things in that *Parable* concerning the man, who having had a plentiful crop of Corn, and having projected for the disposal of it, resolved then to bless himself, and entertain his mind with pleasing discourses, that having, in readiness and security, so copious accommodations, he might now enjoy himself with full satisfaction and delight; not considering, that though his Barns were full, his life was not sure; that God's Pleasure might soon interrupt his Pastime; that the fearful sentence might presently be pronounced; *Thou fool, this night thy life shall be required of thee, and what thou hast prepared, to whom shall it fall?* Euripides calls riches *φιλόψυχον χεῖμα*, a thing which much endears life; or makes men greatly love it; but they do not enable at all to keep it: There is no *ἀντιδωδαιγμα ψυχῆς*, no price, or ransom equivalent to life; all that a man hath, he would give to redeem it, but it is a purchase too dear for all the riches in the World to compass; so the *Psalmist* tells us, *They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; for the redemption of their soul is precious: They cannot redeem their Brother's soul, or life; nor therefore their own; for all souls are of the same value, all greatly surpasses the price of gold and silver. Life was not given us for perpetuity, but lent, or deposited with us; And without delay or evasion it must be resigned into the hand of its just Owner, when he shall please to demand it; and although righteousness may, yet riches (as the *Wise-man* tells us) cannot deliver from death, nor at all profit us in the day of wrath. Could we probably retain our Possessions, for ever in our hands; nay, could we certainly foresee some considerable long definite time, in which we might enjoy our stores, it were perhaps somewhat excusable to scrape and hoard, it might look like rational Providence, it might yield some valuable satisfaction; but since, *Rape, congere, aufer, posside, statim relinquendum est*; since, as Solomon tells us, *Riches are not for ever, nor doth the Crown endure to every generation; yea, since they must be left very soon, nor is there any certainty of keeping them any time; that one day may consume them, one night may dispossess us of them and our life together with them, there can be no reason why we should be solicitous about them; no account given of our setting so high a rate upon them.**



For who would much regard the having custody of a rich treasure for a day or two, then to be stripped of all, and left bare? To be to day invested in large demains, and to morrow to be dispossessed of them? No Man surely would be so fond, as much to affect the condition. Yet this is our case; whatever we call ours, we are but guardians thereof for a few days. This consideration therefore may serve to repress, or moderate in us all covetous desires, proud conceits, vain confidences and satisfactions in respect to worldly Wealth; to induce us (in Job's language) *not to make gold our hope, nor to say to the fine gold, thou art my confidence; not to rejoyce because our wealth is great, and because our hand hath gotten much*; to extirpate from our hearts that root of all evil, the love of Money. For if, as the Preacher thought, the greatest pleasure or benefit accruing from them, is but looking upon them for a while, (*what good, saith he, is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?*) if a little will, nay must suffice our natural appetites, and our present necessities; if more than needs, is but (as the Scripture teaches us) *a trouble* disquieting our minds with care; *a dangerous snare*, drawing us into mischief and sorrow; if this, I say, be their present quality; and were it better yet, could it last for any certain, or any long continuance, is it not evidently better to enjoy that pittance God hath allotted us with ease and contentation of mind; or if we want a necessary supply, to employ only a moderate diligence in getting thereof by the fairest means, which with God's blessing promised thereto, will never fail to procure a competence, and with this to rest content; than with those in Amos, *to pant after the dust of the earth; to lade our selves with thick clay*; to thirst insatiably after floods of glod, to heap up mountains of treasure, to extend unmeasurably our possessions, (*joyning house to house, and laying field to field, till there be no place, that we may be placed alone in the midst of the earth*; as the Prophet Esay doth excellently describe the covetous Man's humour) than, I say, thus incessantly to toil for the maintenance of this frail body, this flitting breath of ours. If Divine Bounty hath freely imparted a plentiful estate upon us, we should indeed bless God for it; *making our selves friends* thereby (as our Saviour advises us) employing it to God's Praise and Service; to the relief and comfort of our Brethren that need; but to seek it earnestly, to set our heart upon it, to relye thereon; to be greatly pleased or elevated in mind thereby, as it argues much infidelity and prophaneness of heart, so it signifies much inconsiderateness and folly, the ignorance of its nature, the forgetfulness of our own condition, upon the grounds discoursed upon.

3. Now in the next place; for Pleasure, that great Witch, which so enchants the World, and which by its mischievous Baits so allures Mankind into sin and misery; although this consideration be not altogether necessary to disparage it (its own nature sufficing to that; for it is more transitory than the shortest life, it dyes in the very enjoyment) yet it may conduce to our wise and good practice in respect thereto, by tempering the sweetness thereof, yea souring its relish to us; minding us of its insufficiency and unserviceableness to the felicity of a mortal creature; yea, its extremely dangerous consequences to a soul, that must survive the short enjoyment thereof. Some Persons indeed, ignorant or incredulous of a future estate; presuming of no sense remaining after death, nor regarding any account to be rendred of this life's actions, have encouraged themselves and others in the free enjoyment of present sensualities, upon the score of our life's shortness and uncertainty; inculcating such *Maxims* as these:

Lucr. — *Brevis est hic fructus hominis;*  
 — *post mortem nulla voluptas.*  
 Quem fors diem quoque dabit, lucro  
 Appone, nec dulces amores  
 Sperne parat, &c.  
 Hor. l. 9.  
 1 Cor. 15. 32.  
 Sap. 2. 1, &c.  
 Let us eat and drink for to morrow we shall dye; because our life is short, let us make the most advantageous use thereof we can; because death is uncertain, let us prevent its surprisal, and be beforehand with it, enjoying somewhat, before it snatches all from us. The Author of Wisdom observeth, and thus represents these Mens discourses: *Our life is short and tedious; and in the death of a man there is no remedy; neither was there any man known to have returned from the graves.* — *Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present;*



present; let us speedily use the creatures like as in youth; Let us fill our selves with costly wine and ointments; and let no flower of the spring pass by us, let us crown our selves with rose-buds before they be withered; let none of us go without his part of voluptuousness — for this is our portion, and our lot is this. Thus, and no wonder, have some men, conceiving themselves beasts, resolved to live as such; renouncing all sober care becoming men, and drowning their reason in brutish sensualities; yet no question, the very same reflection, that this life would soon pass away, and that death might speedily attack them, did not a little quash their mirth, and damp their pleasure. To think, that this perhaps might be the last Banquet they should taste of; that they should themselves shortly become the feast of Worms and Serpents, could not but somewhat spoil the gust of their highest delicacies, and disturb the sport of their loudest jovialties; but, in *Job's* expression, *make the meat in their bowels to turn, and be as the gall of Asps within them.* Those customary enjoyments did so enamour them of sensual delight, that they could not without pungent regret imagine a necessity of soon for ever parting with them; and so their very Pleasure was by this thought made distastful and embittered to them. So did the *Wise man* observe: *O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions; unto the man that hath nothing to vex him; and that hath prosperity in all things; Tea (adds he) unto him, that is yet able to receive meat.* And how bitter then must the remembrance thereof be to him, who walloweth in all kind of corporal satisfaction and delight; that placeth all his happiness in sensual enjoyment? However, as to us, who are better instructed and affected; who know and believe a future state; the consideration, that the time of enjoying these delights will soon be over; that this World's jollity is but like *the crackling of thorns under a pot* (which yields a brisk sound, and a chearful blaze, but heats little, and incessantly passes away) that they leave no good fruits behind them, but do only corrupt and enervate our minds; war against, and hurt our souls; tempt us to sin, and involve us in guilt; that therefore *Solomon* was surely in the right, when he said of laughter, that it is mad, and of mirth, what doeth it? (that is, that the highest of these delights are very irrational impertinences) and of intemperance; that, at the last, it biteth like a Serpent, and stingeth like an Adder; with us, I say, who reflect thus, that *(αρεσκαίῃς ἀμαρτίας ἀπολαύσις)* enjoyment of sinful pleasure for a season cannot obtain much esteem and love; but will rather, I hope, be despised and abhorred by us. I will add only,

4. Concerning secular Wisdom and Knowledge; the which Men do also commonly with great earnestness and ambition seek after, as the most specious ornament, and pure content of their mind; this consideration doth also detect the just value thereof; so as to allay intemperate ardour toward it, pride and conceitedness upon the having or seeming to have it, envy and emulation about it. For imagine, if you please, a Man accomplished with all varieties of learning commendable, able to recount all the stories that have been ever written (or the deeds acted) since the World's beginning; to understand, or with the most delightful fluency and elegancy to speak all the languages, that have at any time been in use among the sons of men; skillful in twisting and untwisting all kinds of subtilties; versed in all sorts of natural experiments, and ready to assign plausible conjectures about the causes of them; studied in all Books whatever, and in all Monuments of Antiquity; deeply knowing in all the mysteries of art, or science, or policy, such as have ever been devised by humane wit, or study or observation; yet all this, such is the pity, he must be forced presently to abandon; all the use he could make of all his notions, the pleasure he might find in them, the reputation accruing to him from them must at that fatal minute vanish; *his breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish.* There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither he goeth. 'Tis seen (saith the Psalmist, seen indeed every day, and observed by all) that wise men die; likewise the fool and brutish person perisheth; one event happeneth to them both; there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; (both dye alike, both alike are forgotten) as the wisest man himself, did (not without some distast) observe

Δοκῇ γὰρ ἡ σοφία θάυμαρος ἡδονὰς  
ἔχειν καὶ ἀειότητι, καὶ τῷ θεῷ αἰψά. *Arist.*  
*Eth. X. 7.*



serve and complain. All our subtle conceits, and nice criticisms; all our fine inventions and goodly speculations shall be swallowed up either in the utter darkness, or in the clearer light of the future state. One Potion of that *Le-*

Pfal. 88. 12.  
Τὴν δ' ἰσομεγέτους διατριβὴν ἐπι-  
σκέπτον, γρηγορῶντες παρ' αὐτῶ τὰς  
μαθητάς, ὡς ἐν αὐτῇ χρησιμὴν τὴν  
χρῆσιν, καὶ δίκας ἐρῶντας. Cato Sen. a-  
pud Plut. pag. 641.

*thean* cup (which we must all take down upon our entrance into that *Land of forgetfulness*) will probably drown the memory, deface the shape of all those *Ideas*, with which we have here stuffed our minds; however they are not like to be of use to us in that new, so different, state; where none of our languages are spoken; none of our experience

will sure; where all things have quite another face unknown, unthought of by us. Where *Aristotle*, and *Varro* shall appear mere Idiots; *Demosthenes* and *Cicero* shall become very infants; the wisest and eloquentest *Greeks* will prove senseless and dumb *Barbarians*; where all our Authors shall have no authority; where we must all go fresh to school again; must unlearn perhaps, what in these misty regions we thought our selves best to know; and begin to learn, what we not once ever dream'd of; Doth therefore, I pray you, so transitory and fruitless a good (for it self I mean and excepting our duty to God, or the reasonable diligence we are bound to use in our calling) deserve such anxious desire; or so restless toil; so careful attention of mind, or assiduous pain of body about it? doth it become us to contend, or emulate so much about it? Above all, do we not most unreasonably, and against the nature of the thing it self we pretend to (that is ignorantly and foolishly) if we are proud and conceited, much value our selves or condemn others, in respect thereto? *Solomon* the most experienced in this matter, and best able to judge thereof (He that gave his heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things, that had been done under Heaven, and this with extream success; even he) passeth the same sentence of vanity, vexation and unprofitableness, upon this, as upon all other subcelestial things. True, he commends wisdom

Διπλῶν δὲ οὐρανῶν  
οἱ μαθόντες  
γράμματα.  
Eccl. 2. 15.

as an excellent and useful thing comparatively; *exceeding folly, so far as light exceedeth darkness*; But since light it self is not permanent, but must give way to darkness; the difference soon vanished; and his opinion thereof abated; considering, that as it happened to the fool, so it happened to him, he breaks into that expostulation: *And why then was I more wise?* to what purpose was such a distinction made, that signified in effect so little? And indeed the Testimony of this great personage may serve for a good *Epilogue* to all this discourse, discovering sufficiently the slender worth of all earthly things. Seeing he, that had given himself industriously to experiment the worth of all things here below, to sound the depth of their utmost perfection and use; who had all the advantages imaginable of performing it; Who flourished in the greatest magnificences of worldly pomp and power; who enjoyed an incredible affluence of all riches; who tasted all varieties of most exquisite pleasure; whose heart was (by God's special gift, and by his own industrious care) enlarged with all kind of knowledge (furnished with notions many as the Sand upon the Sea shore) above all that were before him; who had possessed and enjoyed all that fancy could conceive, or heart could wish, and had arrived to the top of secular Happiness; Yet even He with pathetical reiteration pronounces all to be *vanity and vexation of spirit*; altogether unprofitable and unsatisfactory to the mind of Man. And so therefore we may justly conclude them to be; so finishing the first grand advantage this present consideration affordeth us in order to that wisdom, to which we should apply our hearts.

1 Kings 4. 29.

I should proceed to gather other good fruits, which it is apt to produce, and contribute to the same purpose; but since my thoughts have taken so large scope upon that former head, so that I have already too much, I fear, exercised your patience, I shall only mention the rest. As this consideration doth, as we have seen, First, dispose us rightly to value these temporal goods, and moderate our affections about them; so it doth, Secondly, in like manner, conduce to the right estimation of temporal evils; and thereby to the well tempering our passions in the resentment of them; to the begetting of patience and contentedness in our minds. Also, Thirdly, it may help us to value, and excite us to regard those things (good or evil) which relate to our future state; being the things only of a permanent nature, and of an everlasting



ing consequence to us. Fourthly, It will engage us to husband carefully and well employ this short time of our present life: Not to defer or procrastinate our endeavours to live well; not to be lazy and loitering in the dispatch of our only considerable business, relating to eternity; to embrace all opportunities, and improve all means; and follow the best *compendiums* of good practice leading to eternal bliss. Fifthly, It will be apt to confer much toward the begetting and preserving sincerity in our thoughts, words and actions; causing us to decline all oblique designs upon present mean interests, or base regards to the opinions or affections of men; bearing single respects to our conscience and duty in our actions; Teaching us to speak as we mean; and be what we would seem; to be in our hearts and in our closets, what we appear in our outward expressions and conversations with Men; For considering, that within a very short time all the thoughts of our hearts shall be disclosed; and all the actions of our lives exposed to publick view (being strictly to be examined at the great bar of divine judgment before Angels and Men) we cannot but perceive it to be the greatest folly in the World, for this short present time to disguise our selves; to conceal our intentions, or smother our actions. What hath occurred (upon these important subjects) to my meditation, I must at present, in regard to your patience, omit. I shall close all with that good *Collect* of our Church.

*Almighty God, give us grace, that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him, who liveth and reigneth with thee, and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.*

## S E R M O N XV.

### The Consideration of our Latter End.

P S A L. xc. 12.

*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

**I**N discoursing formerly upon these words (expounded according to the most common and passable interpretation) that which I chiefly observed was this: That the serious consideration of the shortness and frailty of our life is a fit mean or rational instrument subservient to the bringing our hearts to wisdom; that is, to the making us discern, attend unto, embrace, and prosecute such things, as according to the dictates of right reason are truly best for us.

I. The truth of which observation I largely declared from hence, that the said consideration disposeth us to judge rightly about those goods (which ordinarily court and tempt us, *viz.* worldly glory and honour; riches, pleasure, knowledge; to which I might have added wit, strength and beauty) what their just worth and value is; and consequently to moderate our affections, our cares, our endeavours about them; for that if all those goods be uncertain and transitory, there can be no great reason to prize them much, or to affect them vehemently, or to spend much care and pains about them.

*Job 14. 14.  
All the days of  
my appointed  
time will I  
wait, till my  
change come.*

II. I



II. I shall next in the same scales weigh our temporal evils; and say, that also, The consideration of our lives brevity and frailty doth avail to the passing a true judgment of, and consequently to the governing our passions, and ordering our behaviour in respect to all those temporal evils, which either according to the Law of our nature, or the fortuitous course of things, or the particular dispensation of providence do befall us. Upon the declaration of which point I need not insist much, since what was before discoursed concerning the opposite goods doth plainly enough infer it; more immediately indeed in regard to the *mala damni*, or *privationis* (the evils which consist only in the want, or loss of temporal goods) but sufficiently also by a manifest parity of reason in respect to the *mala sensus*, the real pains, crosses and inconveniences, that assail us in this life. For if worldly glory do hence appear to be no more than a transient blaze, a fading shew, a hollow sound, a piece of theatrical pageantry, the want thereof cannot be very considerable to us. Obscurity of condition (living in a valley beneath that dangerous height, and deceitful lustre) cannot in reason be deemed a very sad or pitiful thing; which should displease, or discompose us; if we may thence learn that abundant wealth is rather a needless clog, or a perillous snare, than any great convenience to us; we cannot well esteem to be poor a great infelicity, or to undergo losses a grievous calamity; but rather a benefit to be free from the distractions that attend it; to have little to keep for others, little to care for our selves. If these present pleasures be discerned hence to be only wild fugitive dreams; out of which being soon roused we shall only find bitter regrets to abide; why should not the wanting opportunities of enjoying them be rather accounted a happy advantage, than any part of misery to us? If it seem, that the greatest perfection of curious knowledge (of what use or ornament soever) after it is hardly purchased, must soon be parted with; to be simple or ignorant will be no great matter of lamentation: as those will appear no solid goods, so these consequently must be only *umbræ malorum*, phantasms, or shadows of evil, rather than truly or substantially so; (evils created by fancy, and subsisting thereby; which reason should, and time will surely remove) That in being impatient or disconsolate for them, we are but like children, that fret and wail for the want of petty toys. And for the more real or positive evils such as violently assault nature, whose impressions no reason can so withstand, as to distinguish all distast or afflictive sense of them; yet this consideration will aid to abate and assuage them; affording a certain hope and prospect of approaching redress. It is often seen at Sea, that Men (from unacquaintance with such agitations, or from brackish streams arising from the salt Water) are heartily sick, and discover themselves to be so by apparently grievous symptoms; yet no man hardly there doth mind or pity them, because the malady is not supposed dangerous, and within a while will probably of it self pass over; or that however, the remedy is not far off; the sight of Land, a taste of the fresh air will relieve them: 'Tis near our Case: We passing over this troublesome Sea of life; from unexperience, joyned with the tenderness of our constitution, we cannot well endure the changes and crosses of fortune; to be toss'd up and down; to suck in the sharp vapours of penury, disgrace, sickness, and the like, doth beget a qualm in our stomachs; make us nauseate all things, and appear sorely distempered; yet is not our condition so dismal, as it seems; we may grow hardier, and wear out our sense of affliction; however, the Land is not

far off, and by disembarking hence we shall suddenly be discharged of all our molestations. 'Tis a common solace of grief, approved by wise men, *si gravis, brevis est; si longus, levis*; if it be very grievous and acute it cannot continue long, without intermission or respite; if it abide long, it is supportable; intolerable pain is like lightning, it destroys us, or is it self instantly destroyed. However, death at length (which never is far off) will free us; be we never so much tossed with storms of misfortune, that is a sure haven; be we persecuted with never so many enemies, that is a safe refuge; let what pains or diseases soever infest us, that is an assured *Anodynon*, and infallible remedy for

Sen. Ep. 89.

Θάραξι πόνυ γδ ἀλγόν ἐκ ἐχέει χρόνον.

Τὸ μὲν ἀφόρητον ἐξάγει τὸ δὲ χρόνιον φορητόν. Ant. VII. Sect. 33.

Summi doloris intentio invenit finem: nemo potest valde dolore &amp; diu: sic nos amantissima nostri natura disposuit, ut dolorem aut tolerabilem, aut brevem faceret. Sen. Ep. 24.

Dolore percussim mortem impleramus, cumque unam, ut miseriarum malorumque terminum, exceperamus. Cic. conf.

Moriar? hoc dicis, desinam agrotare posse. &amp;c. Sen.



for them all; however we be wearied with the labours of the day, the night will come and ease us; the grave will become a bed of rest unto us. Shall I die? I shall then cease to be sick; I shall be exempted from disgrace; I shall be enlarged from prison; I shall be no more pinched with want; no more tormented with pain. Death is a Winter, that as it withers the Rose and Lilly, so it kills the Nettle and Thistle; as it stifles all worldly joy and pleasure, so it suppresses all care and grief; as it hushes the voice of mirth and melody, so it stills the clamours and the sighs of misery; as it defaces all the World's glory, so it covers all disgrace, wipes off all tears, silences all complaint, buries all disquiet and discontent. King *Philip* of *Macedon* once threatened the *Spartans* to vex them sorely, and bring them into great straits; but, answered they, *can he hinder us from dying?* that indeed is a way of evading, which no enemy can obstruct, no Tyrant can debar Men from; they who can deprive of life, and its conveniences, cannot take away death from them. There is a place, *Job* tells us, *where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary be at rest; where the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor; the small and great are there; and the servant is free from his Master.*

'Tis therefore but holding out a while, and a deliverance from the worst this World can molest us with, shall of its own accord arrive unto us; in the mean time 'tis better that we at present owe the benefit of our comfort to reason, than afterward to time; by rational consideration to work patience and contentment in our selves; and to use the shortness of our life as an argument to sustain us in our affliction, than to find the end thereof only a natural and necessary means of our rescue from it. The contemplation of this cannot fail to yield something of courage and solace to us in the greatest pressures; these transient, and short-liv'd evils, if we consider them as so, cannot appear such horrid bugbears, as much to affright or dismay us; if we remember how short they are, we cannot esteem them so great, or so intolerable. There be, I must confess, divers more noble considerations, proper and available to cure discontent and impatience. The considering, that all these evils proceed from God's just will, and wise providence; unto which it is fit, and we upon all accounts are obliged readily to submit; that they do ordinarily come from God's goodness, and gracious design toward us; that they are medicines (although ungrateful, yet wholesome) administered by the Divine Wisdom to prevent, remove or abate our distempers of soul (to allay the tumours of pride, to cool the fevers of intemperate desire; to rouse us from the lethargy of sloath; to stop the gangrene of bad conscience) that they are fatherly corrections intended to reclaim us from sin, and excite us to duty; that they serve as instruments or occasions to exercise, to try, to refine our virtue; to beget in us the hope, to qualify us for the reception of better rewards; such discourses indeed are of a better nature, and have a more excellent kind of efficacy; yet no fit help, no good art, no just weapon is to be quite neglected in the combat against our spiritual foes. A Pebble-stone hath been sometimes found more convenient than a Sword or a Spear to slay a Giant. Baser remedies (by reason of the Patient's constitution, or circumstances) do sometime produce good effect, when others in their own nature more rich and potent want efficacy. And surely frequent reflections upon our mortality, and living under the sense of our lives frailty, cannot but conduce somewhat to the begetting in us an indifferency of mind toward all these temporal occurrents; to extenuate both the goods and the evils we here meet with; consequently therefore to compose and calm our passions about them.

III. But I proceed to another use of that consideration we speak of emergent from the former, but so as to improve it to higher purposes. For since it is useful to the diminishing our admiration of these worldly things, to the withdrawing our affections from them, to the slackning our endeavours about them; it will follow that it must conduce also to beget an esteem, a desire, a prosecution of things conducing to our future welfare; both by removing the obstacles of doing so, and by engaging us to consider the importance of those things in comparison with these. By removing obstacles, I say; for while our hearts are possessed with regard and passion toward these present things, there can be no room left in them for respect and affection toward things future.

'Tis



'Tis in our soul as in the rest of nature; there can be no penetration of objects (as it were) in our hearts; nor any vacuity in them; our mind no more than our body can be in several places, or tend several ways, or abide in perfect rest; yet somewhere it will always be; some-whither it will always go; some-what it will ever be doing. If we *have a treasure* here (some-what we greatly like and much confide in) *our hearts will be here* with it; and if here, they cannot be elsewhere; they will be taken up; they will rest satisfied; they will not care to seek farther. If we affect worldly glory, and delight in the applause of men, we shall not be so careful to please God, and seek his favour. If we admire and repose confidence in riches, it will make us neglectful of God; and distrustful of his Providence; if our mind thirsts after, and sucks in greedily sensual pleasures, we shall not relish spiritual delights, attending the practice of virtue and piety, or arising from good conscience; adhering to, attending upon Masters of so different, so opposite a quality is inconsistent; they cannot abide peaceably together, they cannot both rule in our narrow breasts; we shall love and hold to the one; hate and despise the other.

Mat. 6. 21. *If any man love the World, the love of the Father is not in him*; the love of the World, as the present guest, so occupies and fills the room; that it will not admit, cannot hold the love of God. But when the heart is discharged and emptied of these things; when we begin to despise them as base and vain; to distast them as insipid and unfavoury; then naturally will succeed a desire after other things promising a more solid content; and desire will breed endeavour; and endeavour (furthered by God's assistance always ready to back it) will yield such a glimpse and taste of those things, as will so comfort and satisfy our minds, that thereby they will be drawn and engaged into a more earnest prosecution of them. When (I say) driving on ambitious Projects, heaping up Wealth, providing for the flesh (by our reflecting on the shortness and frailty of our life) become so insipid to us, that we find little appetite to them, or relish in them; our restless minds will begin to hunger and thirst after righteousness, desiring some satisfaction thence: Discerning these secular and carnal fruitions to be mere *husks* (the proper food of swine) we shall bethink our selves of that better nourishment (of rational or spiritual comfort) which our Father's house doth afford to his children and servants. Being somewhat disentangled from the care of our farms and our trafficks; from yoking our oxen, and being married to our present delights; we may be at leisure, and in disposition to comply with divine invitations to entertainment spiritual. Experiencing, that our trade about these petty commodities turns to small account, and that in the end we shall be nothing richer thereby; reason will induce us with the Merchant in the Gospel to *sell all that we have* (to forego our present interests and designs) for the Purchasing that *rich Pearl* of God's Kingdom, which will yield so exceeding profit; the gain of present comfort to our conscience, and eternal happiness to our souls. In fine, when we consider seriously, that *we have here no abiding City*, but are only *sojourners and pilgrims upon Earth*; that all our care and pain here do regard only an uncertain and transitory state; and will therefore suddenly as to all fruit and benefit be lost unto us; this will suggest unto us, with the good Patriarchs, *to long after a better Countrey*; a more assured, and lasting state of life; where we may enjoy some certain and durable repose; to tend homeward, in our desires and hopes, toward those eternal mansions of joy and rest prepared for God's faithful servants in Heaven. Thus will this consideration help toward the bringing us to inquire after and regard the things concerning our future state; and in the result will engage us to compare them with these present things, as to our concernment in them and the consequence of them to our advantage or damage, whence a right judgment, and a congruous practice will naturally follow. There be four ways of comparing the things relating to this present life with those which respect our future state: Comparing the goods of this with the goods of that; the evils of this with the evils of that; the goods of this with the evils of that; the evils of this with the goods of that. All these comparisons we may find often made in Scripture; in order to the informing our judgment about the respective value of both sorts; the present consideration intervening, as a standard to measure and try them by.

First



First then; comparing the present goods with those which concern our future state, since the transitoriness and uncertainty of temporal goods detract from their worth, and render them in great degree contemptible; but the durability and certainty of spiritual goods doth encrease their rate, and make them exceedingly valuable; 'tis evident hence, that spiritual goods are infinitely to be preferred in our opinion, to be more willingly embraced, to be more zealously pursued than temporal goods, that, in case of competition, when both cannot be enjoyed, we are in reason obliged readily to part with all these, rather than to forfeit our title unto, or hazard our hope of those. Thus in the Scripture it is often discoursed: *The world* (saith St. John) *passeth away, and the desire thereof; but he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever*: The World, and all that is desirable therein, is transient; but obedience to God's commandments is of an everlasting consequence; whence he infers, that we should *not love the world*; that is, not entertain such an affection thereto, as may any way prejudice the love of God, or hinder the obedience springing thence, or suitable thereto.

*All flesh is grass* (saith St. Peter) *and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass; the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; But the word of the Lord endureth for ever*: All worldly glory is frail and fading, but the Word of God is eternally firm and permanent; that is, the good things by God promised to them, who faithfully serve him, shall infallibly be conferred on them to their everlasting benefit; whence it follows, that, as he exhorts, we are bound to gird up the loins of our mind, to be sober, and hope to the end; to proceed and persist constantly in faithful obedience to God. *Charge those* (saith St. Paul) *who are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God; that they do good, be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; treasuring up for themselves a good foundation for the future; that they may attain everlasting life*: Since, argues he, present riches are of uncertain and short continuance; but faith and obedience to God, exercised in our charity and mercy toward men, are a certain stock improveable to our eternal interest; therefore be not proud of, nor rely upon those, but regard especially, and employ our selves upon these. Our Saviour himself doth often insist upon, and inculcate this comparison: *Treasure not unto your selves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust do corrupt; and where thieves break through and steal; but treasure up to your selves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal. Do not take care for your soul, what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink; nor for your body, what ye shall put on; but seek first the kingdom of God. Labour not for the food that perisheth, but for the food that abideth to eternal life; sell your substance, and give alms; provide your selves bags that wax not old; an indefectible treasure in the heavens*: Thus doth the Holy Scripture, setting forth the uncertainty and transitoriness of the present, the certainty and permanency of future goods, declare the excellency of these above those; advising thereupon, with highest reason, that we willingly reject those (in real effect, if need be, however always in ready disposition of mind) in order to the procuring or securing of these. It also, for our example and encouragement, commends to us the wisdom and virtue of those Persons, who have effectually practised this duty: of *Abraham, our Father*, who, in expectation of that well-founded City, made and built by God, did readily desert his Countrey and Kindred, with all present accommodations of life; of *Moses*, who disregarded the splendours and delights of a great Court; rejected the alliance of a great Princess, and refused to be called the son of *Pharaoh's daughter*; in respect to the *μειζωποδοσία*, that future distribution of reward; a share wherein shall assuredly fall to them, who above all other considerations regard the performance of their duty to God; of the *Apostles*, who forsook all, Parents, Brethren, Lands, Houses, Trades, receipts of Custome, to follow *Christ*; him at present poor, and naked of all secular honour, power, wealth and delight; in hope only to receive from him divine benefits, and future preferments in his Kingdom; of *Mary*, who neglecting present affairs, and seating her self at *Jesus* his feet, attending to his discipline; is commended for her wisdom, in minding the *only necessary thing*; in choosing



- Phil. 3. 7. 8. *the better part, which could never be taken from her: of St. Paul, who accounted all his gains (all his worldly interests and privileges) to be damage, to be dung in respect to Christ, and the excellent knowledge of him, with the benefits thence accruing to them. On the contrary there we have Esau condemned and stigmatized for a prophane and a vain person, who (ἀντὶ μιᾶς ἐσώσεως) for one little eating-bout, one mess of Pottage (for a little present satisfaction of sense, or for the sustentance of this frail life) did withgo his birthright, that emblem of spiritual blessings and privileges. We have again represented to us that unhappy young Gentleman; who, though he had good qualities, rendering him amiable even to our Saviour; and had been trained up in the observance of God's Commandments; yet not being content to part with his large Possessions, in lieu of the treasure by Christ offered in Heaven, was reputed deficient; could find no acceptance with God, nor admission into his Kingdom; for a petty temporal commodity forfeiting an infinite eternal advantage. For, faith our Saviour, He that loveth father or mother above me; he that doth not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yea his own life (for me and the Gospel) is not worthy of me, nor can be my disciple. He that in his esteem or affection doth prefer any temporal advantages before the benefits tendred by our Saviour (yea doth not in comparison despise, renounce and reject his dearest contents of life, and the very capacity of enjoying them, his life it self) doth not deserve to be reckoned among the Disciples of Christ; to be so much as a Pretender to eternal joy, or a candidate of immortality. Our Saviour rejects all such unwise and perverse traders, who will not exchange brittle glafs for solid gold; counterfeit glistering stones for genuine most precious jewels; a garland of fading flowers for an incorruptible crown of Glory; a small temporary pension for a vastly rich freehold; an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens. Thus doth the Holy Scripture teach us to compare these sorts of good things; And, secondly, so also doth it to compare the evils of both states; for that seeing, as the soon ceasing of temporal mischiefs should (in reasonable proceeding) diminish the fear of them, and mitigate the grief for them; so the incessant continuance of spiritual evils doth (according to just estimation) render them hugely grievous and formidable; 'tis plain, that we should much more dislike, abominate, and shun spiritual evils, than temporal; that we should make no question rather to endure these paroxysms of momentany pain, than incur those chronical and (indeed) incurable maladies; that we should run willingly into these shallow plashes of present inconvenience, rather than plunge our selves into those unfathomable depths of eternal misery. There is (I suppose) no man, who would not account it a very great calamity (such as hardly greater could befall him here) to have his right eye plucked out, and his right hand cut off, and his foot taken from him; to be deformed and maimed, so that he can do nothing, or stir any whither; yet our Lord represents these to us as inconsiderable evils, yea as things very eligible and advantageous in comparison of those mischiefs, which the voluntary not embracing them, in case we cannot otherwise than by so doing avoid sin, will bring on us: οὐ μὲν γὰρ σοι, it is (saith he) profitable for thee, that one of thy members be lost, rather than that thy whole body be cast into hell; καλὸν σοι ἐστίν, 'tis good, 'tis excellent for thee to enter into life lame and maimed, and one ey'd, rather than having two hands and two feet, and two eyes, (in all integrity and beauty of this temporal, or corporal state) to be cast into eternal fire. To be banished from ones native soil, secluded from all comforts of friendly acquaintance, divested irrecoverably of great estate and dignity; becoming a vagrant and a servant in vile employment, in a strange Countrey, every Man would be apt to deem a wretched condition; yet Moses, we see, freely chose it, rather than by enjoying unlawful pleasures at home, in Pharaoh's Court, to incur God's displeasure and vengeance: οὐκ ἠγάπησεν αὐτὸν ὁ λαὸς ἑαυτὸν ἀποδοῦναι, choosing rather to undergo evil together with God's people, than to have πρὸς ὁρᾶν ὁρᾶν μαγείας ἀποδοῦναι, a temporary fruition of sinful delight, dangerous to the welfare of his soul. Death is commonly esteemed the most extreme and terrible of evils incident to man; yet our Saviour bids us not to regard or fear it, in comparison of that deadly ruin, which we adventure on by*



by offending God: *I say unto you my friends* (saith he, he intended it for the most friendly advice) *Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have nothing farther to do; but I will shew you whom ye shall fear; Fear him, who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell, to cast both body and soul into Hell, and destroy them therein; Yea, I say unto you* (so he inculcates and impresses it upon them) *fear him.*

But thirdly; Considering the good things of this life together with the evils of that, which is to come; Since enjoying these goods in comparison with enduring those evils is but rejoycing for a moment in respect of mourning to eternity; if upon the seeming sweetness of these enjoyments to our carnal appetite be consequent a remediless distempering of our soul; so that what tastes like honey proves gall in the digestion; gripes our bowels, gnaws our heart, and stings our conscience for ever; if present mirth and jollity have a tendency to that dreadful weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth threatned in the Gospel; if for the praise and favour of a few giddy men here we venture eternal shame and confusion before God and Angels and all good men hereafter; if for attaining or preserving a small stock of uncertain riches in this World we shall reduce our selves into a state of most uncomfortable nakedness and penury in the other: 'Tis clear as the Sun that we are downright fools and mad men, if we do not upon these accounts rather willingly reject all these good things, than hazard incurring any of those evils; for, saith truth it self, *What will it profit a man, if he gain the whole World* (εἰ ζημιωθῇ τὴν ψυχὴν) *and be endamaged as to his soul, or lose his soul as a mulct.* 'Tis a very disadvantageous bargain, for all the conveniencies this World can afford to be deprived of the comforts of our immortal state. But,

Lastly, comparing the evils of this life with the benefits of the future; since the worst tempests of this life will be soon blown over, the bitterest crosses must expire (if not before, however) with our breath; but the good things of the future state are immutable and perpetual; 'tis in evident consequence most reasonable, that we freely (if need be) undertake, and patiently endure these for the sake of those; that in hope of that *incorruptible inheritance, laid up for us in Heaven*, we not only support and comfort our selves, but even rejoyce and exult in all the afflictions by God's wise and just dispensation imposed on us here; as they in St. Peter; wherein (saith he) *ye greatly rejoyce* (or exult,) *being for a little while as in heaviness through manifold afflictions or trials.* Accounting it all joy (saith St. James) *when ye fall into divers temptations* (that is, afflictions or trials) *knowing that the trial of your faith perfecteth patience; that is, seeing the sufferance of these present evils conduceth to the furtherance of your spiritual and eternal welfare.* And, *We glory in tribulation*, saith St. Paul; rendring the same account, because it tended to their souls advantage: St. Paul, than whom no man perhaps ever more deeply tasted of the cup of affliction; and that tempered with all the most bitter ingredients which this World can produce; Whose life was spent in continual agitation and unsettledness; in all hardships of travel and labour and care; in extreme sufferance of all pains both of body and mind; in all imaginable dangers and difficulties and distresses, that nature exposes man unto, or humane malice can bring upon him; in all wants of natural comfort (food, sleep, shelter, liberty, health) in all kinds of disgrace and contumely; as you may see in those large inventories of his sufferings, registred by himself, in the 6th and 11th Chapters of his 2d Epistle to the Corinthians; Yet all this, considering the good things he expected afterward to enjoy, he accounted very slight and tolerable: For (saith he) *our lightness of affliction, that is for a little while here, worketh for us a far more exceeding weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen; but at those, which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.* For we know, that when our earthly house of this tabernacle (of this unsteady transitory abode) is dissolved we are to have a tabernacle from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens. I reckon, saith he again, that is having made a due comparison and computation I find, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy (that is are not considerable, come under no rate or proportion) in respect of the glory which shall be revealed (or openly conferred) upon us.



Heb. 10. 34.  
Θεατεῖσθε  
ἡμῶν  
\* Ἀπαργύω

Heb. 12. 2f

The like opinion had those faithful Christians, in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, of whom 'tis said, that *being exposed to publick scorn as in the theatre, with reproaches and afflictions, they did with gladness accept the spoiling* \* (or rapine) *of their goods; knowing that they had in Heaven a better and more induring substance.* But the principal example (most obliging our imitation) of this wise choice, is that of our *Lord himself*; who, in contemplation of the future great satisfaction and reward of patient submission to the divine will; did willingly undergo the greatest of temporal sorrows and ignominies; *Who* (saith the *Apostle to the Hebrews*, propounding his example to us) *for the joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God.*

Thus immediately, or by an easie inference, doth the consideration of this life's shortness and uncertainty confer to that main part of wisdom, rightly to value the things about which we are conversant; disposing us consequently to moderate our affections, and rightly to guide our actions about them; fitting us therefore for the performance of those duties so often enjoined us; of not caring for, not trusting in, not minding (unduly that is, and immoderately) things below; of dying to this World, and taking up our cross, or contentedly suffering (in submission to God's will) all loss and inconvenience; as also to the placing our meditation and care, our love and desire, our hope and confidence, our joy and satisfaction, our most earnest pains and endeavours, upon things divine, spiritual and eternal.

Πολυτελέστα-  
τον ἀνάλωμα.

Nulla nisi tem-  
poris honesta est  
avaritia. Sen.

Non enim dat  
natura virtu-  
tem; ars est bo-  
num fieri. Sen.  
Ep. 89.

IV. I proceed to another general benefit of that general consideration; which is, that it may engage us to a good improvement of our time; the doing which is a very considerable piece of wisdom. For if time be, (as *Theophrastus* called it truly) *a thing of most precious value* (or expence) as it were a great folly to lavish it away unprofitably; so to be frugal thereof, and careful to lay it out for the best advantage, especially every Man having so little store thereof, must be a special point of Prudence. *To be covetous of time* (*Seneca* tells us) *is a commendable avarice*; it being necessary for the accomplishment of any worthy enterprize; there being nothing excellent, that can soon or easily be effected. Surely he that hath much and great business to dispatch, and but a little time allowed for it, is concerned to husband it well; not to lose it wholly in idleness; not to trifle it away in unnecessary diversions; not to put himself upon other impertinent affairs; above all not to create obstacles to himself, by pursuing matters of a tendency quite contrary to the success of his main undertakings. 'Tis our case; we are obliged here to negotiate in business of infinite price and consequence to us; no less than the salvation of our souls, and eternal happiness; and we see, that our time to drive it on and bring it to a happy issue is very scant and short; short in it self, and very short in respect to the nature of those affairs; the great variety, and the great difficulty of them: The great father of *Physicians* did quicken the students of that faculty to diligence, by admonishing them (in the first place, setting it in the front of his famous *Aphorisms*) that, *life is short, and art is long.* And how much more so is the art of living well (that most excellent and most necessary art; for indeed virtue is not a gift of nature, but a work of art; an effect of labour and study) this, I say, most needful and useful art of living virtuously and piously; this art of spiritual Physick; (of preserving and recovering our souls health) how much longer is it? how many rules are to be learnt? how many precepts to be observed in order thereto? We are bound to furnish our minds with needful knowledge of God's will and our duty; we are to bend our unwilling wills to a ready compliance with them; we are to adorn our souls with dispositions suitable to the future state (such as may qualify us for the presence of God, and conversation with the blessed spirits above) it is incumbent on us to mortify corrupt desires, to restrain inordinate passions, to subdue natural propensities, to extirpate vicious habits; in order to the effecting these things, to use all fit means; devotion toward God, study of his Law, reflection upon our actions, with all such spiritual instruments; the performing which duties, as it doth require great care and pains, so it needs much time; all this is not *dictum factum*, as soon done as said; a few spare minutes will not suffice to accomplish it. Natural inclination, that wild beast within



within us, will not so presently be tamed, and made tractable by us. Ill habits cannot be removed without much exercise and attendance; as they were begot, so they must be destroyed, by a constant succession, and frequency of acts. <sup>Ti φέρει ἑ-  
δος; ἐναντίον  
ἑδος. EpiCt.</sup> Fleshly lust is not to be killed with a stab or two; it will fight stoutly, and rebel often, and hold out long, before with our utmost endeavour we can obtain an entire victory over it. No virtue is acquired in an instant, but by degrees, step by step; from the seeds of right instruction and good resolution it springs up, and grows forward by a continual progress of customary practice; 'tis a child of patience, a fruit of perseverance (that *ὑπομονὴ ἐργασίας ἀγαθῆς*, *en-* Rom. 2. 7. *during in doing well*, St. Paul speaks of) and consequently a work of time, for enduring implies a good space of time. Having therefore so much to do, and of so great concernment, and so little a portion of time for it, it behoves us to be careful in the improvement of what time is allowed us; to embrace all opportunities and advantages offered; to go the nearest way, to use the best *compendiums* in the transaction of our business; not to be slothful and negligent, but active and intent about it; (for as time is diminished, and in part lost by sloth or slackness; so it is enlarged, and, as it were, multiplied by industry; my day is two in respect of his, who doeth but half my work.) Not (also) to consume our time in fruitless pastimes, and curious entertainments of fancy; being idly busie about impertinences and trifles (we call it sport; but 'tis a serious damage to us;) not to immerse our selves in multiplicities of needless care about secular matters, which may distract us, and bereave us of fit leisure for our great employment; that which our Saviour calls *τυβάζεσθαι* Luke 10. 40. *περιπλάττειν*, to keep a great deal of do and stir (to be jumbled about as it were, and confounded) about many things; and, *περιπαδάσαι περὶ πολλῶν διακονίαν*, to be distracted and perplexed about much combersome service; which St. Paul calls *περὶ ἁλυσθαι τῶν τῆς βίης πραγμάτων*, to be implicated and entangled (as in a net) Tim. 2. 4. with the negotiations of this present life; so that we shall not be expedite, or free to bestir our selves about our more weighty affairs. The spending much time about those things doth steal it from these; yea doth more than so, by discomposing our minds so that we cannot well employ what time remains upon our spiritual concerns. But especially we should not prostitute our time upon vicious projects and practices; doing which is not only a prodigality of the present time, but an abridgment of the future; it not only doth not promote or set forward our business, but brings it backward, and makes us more work than we had before; 'tis a going in a way directly contrary to our journey's end. The Scripture aptly resembles our life to a wayfaring, a condition of travel and pilgrimage; now he that hath a long journey to make, and but a little time of day to pass it in, must in reason strive to set out soon, and then to make good speed; must proceed on directly, making no stops or deflections (not calling in at every sign that invites him, not standing to gaze at every object seeming new or strange to him; not staying to talk with every Passenger that meets him; but rather avoiding all occasions of diversion and delay) lest he be surprised by the night, be left to wander in the dark, be excluded finally from the place whither he tends: So must we in our course towards Heaven and Happiness, take care that we set out soon (procrastinating no time, but beginning instantly to insist in the ways of Piety and Virtue) then proceed on speedily, and persist constantly, no where staying or loitering, shunning all impediments and avocations from our Progress; lest we never arrive near, or come too late unto the gate of Heaven. St. Peter tells us, that the end of all things doth approach, and thereupon advises us to be sober, and to watch unto prayer; for that the less our time is, the more intent and industrious it concerns us to be. And, St. Paul enjoins us to *redeem the time*, Eph. 5. 15. *because the days are evil*; that is, since we can enjoy no true quiet or comfort here, we should improve our time to the best advantage for the future; he might have also adjoined, with the Patriarch Jacob, the paucity of the days to their badness; because *the days of our life are few and evil*, let us redeem the time; *Mum that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble*: So few indeed they are, that 'tis fit we should lose none of them, but use them all in preparation toward that great change we are to make; that fatal passage out of this frail time into that boundless eternity. So, it seems, we have Job's example



Job 14. 14. example of doing: *All the days (says he) of my appointed time will I wait till my change come.* I end this Point with that so comprehensive warning of our Saviour: *Take heed to your selves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. Watch ye therefore and pray that ye may be counted worthy to escape — and to stand before the son of man.*

V. I shall adjoyn but one use more, to which this consideration may be subservient, which is, that it may help to beget and maintain in us (that which is the very heart and soul of all goodness) Sincerity. Sincerity in all kinds, in our thoughts, words and actions. To keep us from harbouring in our breasts such thoughts, as we would be afraid or ashamed to own: from speaking otherwise than we mean, than we intend to do, than we are ready any-where openly to avow; from endeavouring to seem what we are not; from being one thing in our expressions and conversations with men; another in our hearts, or in our closets. From acting with oblique respects to private interests or passions, to humane favour or censure (in matters, I mean, where duty doth intervene, and where pure conscience ought to guide and govern us) from making professions and ostentations (void of substance, of truth, of knowledge, of good purpose) great semblances of peculiar sanctimony, integrity, scrupulosity, spirituality, refinedness, like those *Pharisees* so often therefore taxed in the Gospel; as also from palliating, as those men did, designs of ambition, avarice, envy, animosity, revenge, perverse humour, with pretences of zeal and conscience. We should indeed strive to be good (and that in all real strictness, aiming at utmost perfection) in outward act, and appearance, as well as in heart and reality; for the glory of God and example of men

Rom. 12. 17. *(providing things honest in the sight of all men)* but we must not shine with a false lustre, nor care to seem better than we are, nor intend to serve our selves in seeming to serve God; bartering spiritual commodities for our own glory or gain. For since the day approaches when God will judge *τὰ κρυφὰ ἀνθρώπων*, the things men do so studiously conceal; when God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil; since we must all appear (or rather be all made apparent, be manifested and discovered) at the tribunal of Christ: since there is nothing covered, which shall not be revealed, nor hid that shall not be known; so that whatever is spoken in the ear in closets, shall be proclaimed on the house tops: Since at length, and that within a very short time (no man knows how soon) the whispers of every mouth (the closest murmurs of detraction, slander and sycophantry) shall become audible to every ear; the abstrusest thoughts of all hearts (the closest malice and envy) shall be disclosed in the most publick Theatre before innumerable spectators; the truth of all pretences shall be thoroughly examined; the just merit of every person, and every cause shall with a most exact scrutiny be scann'd openly in the face of all the World; to what purpose can it be to juggle or baffle for a time; for a few days (perhaps for a few minutes) to abuse, or to amuse those about us with crafty dissimulation or deceit? Is it worth the pains to devise plausible shifts, which shall instantly, we know, be detected and defeated; to bedaub foul designs with a fair varnish, which death will presently wipe off; to be dark and cloudy in our proceedings, whenas a clear day (that will certainly dispel all darkness and scatter all mists) is breaking in upon us; to make vizors for our faces, and cloaks for our actions, whenas we must very shortly be exposed, perfectly naked and undisguised, in our true colours, to the general view of Angels and Men? Heaven sees at present what we think and do, and our conscience cannot be wholly ignorant or insensible; nor can Earth it self be long unacquainted therewith. Is it not much better, and more easie (since it requires no pains or study) to act our selves, than to accommodate our selves to other unbeseeming and undue parts; to be upright in our intentions, consistent in our discourses, plain in our dealings, following the single and uniform guidance of our reason and conscience, than to shuffle and shift, wandring after the various, uncertain and inconstant opinions or humours of men? What matter is it, what cloaths we wear, what garb we appear in, during this posture of travel and sojourning here; what for the present we go for; how men esteem us, what they think of our actions? St.

Paul



Paul at least did not much stand upon it; for *with me*, said he, 'tis a very 1 Cor. 4. 3. small thing (ἐλαχίστον, the least thing that can come under consideration) to be judged of you, or of humane day (that is, of this present transitory, fallible, reverfible judgment of men.) If we mean well and do righteously our conscience will at present satisfy us, and the divine (unerring and impartial) sentence will hereafter acquit us; no unjust or uncharitable censure shall prejudice us; if we entertain base designs, and deal unrighteously, as our conscience will accuse and vex us here, so God will shortly condemn and punish us; neither shall the most favourable conceit of men stand us in stead. *Every man's* 1 Cor. 3. 13. work shall become manifest; for the day shall declare it; because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire (that is, a severe and strict inquiry) shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. I cannot insist more on this Point; I shall only say, that considering the brevity and uncertainty of our present state, the greatest simplicity may justly be deemed the truest wisdom; that who deceives others doth cozen himself most; that the deepest policy (used to compass, or to conceal bad designs) will in the end appear the most downright folly.

I might add to the precedent discourses, that *Philosophy* it self hath commended this consideration as a proper and powerful instrument of virtue; recommending the practice thereof a main part of wisdom; the greatest proficient herein in common esteem, *Socrates*, having defined *Philosophy* (or the study of wisdom) to be nothing else, but (μάλιστα θανάτου) *the study of death*; intimating also (in *Plato's Phædon*) that this study, the meditation of death and preparation of his mind to leave this World, had been the constant and chief employment of his life. That likewise, according to experience, nothing more avails to render the minds of men sober and well composed, than such spectacles of Mortality, as do impress this consideration upon them. For whom doth not the sight of a Coffin or of a Grave gaping to receive a friend perhaps, or an ancient Acquaintance; however a man in nature and state altogether like our selves; of the mournful looks and habits, of all the sad pomps and solemnities attending man unto his long home, by minding him of his own frail condition, affect with some serious, some honest, some wise thoughts? And if we be reasonable men we may every day supply the need of such occasions, by representing to our selves the necessity of our soon returning to the dust; dressing in thought our own Herfes, and celebrating our own Funerals; by living under the continual apprehension and sense of our transitory and uncertain condition; dying daily, or becoming already dead unto this World. The doing which effectually being the gift of God, and an especial work of his Grace, let us of him humbly implore it, saying after the Holy Prophet, Lord, so teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Amen.

Τὸτο ἔχει ἡ  
τελειότης τοῦ  
ἡθους τὸ πᾶ-  
σαν ἡμέραν ὡς  
τελευταίαν  
διεξάγειν.  
Anton. lib. 7.



# S E R M O N XVI.

## The Danger and Mischief of delaying Repentance.

P S A L. cxix. 60.

*I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy Commandments.*

**T**HIS Psalm (no less excellent in virtue, than large in bulk) containeth manifold reflections upon the nature, the properties, the adjuncts and effects of God's Law; many sprightly ejaculations about it (conceived in different forms of speech; some in way of petition, some of thanksgiving, some of resolution, some of assertion or aphorism) many useful directions, many zealous exhortations to the observance of it; the which are not ranged in any strict order, but (like a variety of fair flowers and wholesome herbs in a wide field) do with a grateful confusion lie dispersed, as they freely did spring up in the heart, or were suggested by the devout spirit of him, who indited the *Psalm*; whence no coherence of sentences being designed, we may consider any one of them absolutely or singly by it self.

Among them, that which I have picked out for the subject of my discourse, implieth an excellent rule of practice, authorised by the *Psalmist's* example; it is propounded in way of devotion or immediate address to God; unto whose infallible knowledge his conscience maketh an appeal concerning his practice; not as boasting thereof, but as praising God for it, unto whose gracious instruction and succour he frequently doth ascribe all his performances: But the manner of propounding I shall not insist upon; the rule it self is, that speedily, without any procrastination or delay, we should apply our selves to the observance of God's Commandments; the practice of which rule it shall be my endeavour to recommend and press.

It is a common practice of men, that are engaged in bad courses, which their own conscience discerneth and disapproveth, to adjourn the reformation of their lives to a farther time, so indulging themselves in the present commission of sin, that yet they would seem to purpose, and promise themselves here-

*Recognosce singulos, considera universos. nullius non vicia spectat in crastinum; non enim vivunt, sed victuri sunt. Sen. Ep. 45.*

*Vitiosos agimus semper, nec vivimus unquam. Manil. 4.*

Prov. 6. 10.

Plut. in Pelop.

*Non est crede mihi sapientis dicere, vivam. Mart. I. 16.*

after to repent and take up: Few resolve to persist finally in an evil way, or despair of being one day reclaimed; but immediately and effectually to set upon it, many deem unseasonable or needless; it will, they presume, be soon enough to begin to morrow or next day, a month or a year hence, when they shall find more commodious opportunity, or shall prove better disposed thereto; in the mean time with *Solomon's* sluggard, *Let say they, a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands*; let us but neglect this duty, let us but satisfy this appetite, let us but enjoy this bout of pleasure; hereafter, God willing, we mean to be more careful, we hope that we shall become more sober: So like bad debtors; when our conscience dunneeth us, we always mean, we always promise to pay; if she will stay a while, she shall, we tell her, be satisfied; or like vain spendthrifts, we see our estate fly, yet presume that it will hold out, and at length we shall reserve enough for our use.

But how fallacious, how dangerous and how mischievous this manner of proceeding is; how much better and more adviseable it is, after the example propounded in our Text, speedily to betake our selves unto the discharge of our debt and duty to God, the following considerations will plainly declare.

I. We



1. We may consider, that the observance of God's Commandments (an observance of them proceeding from an habitual disposition of mind, in a constant tenour of practice) is our indispensable duty, our main concernment, our only way to happiness; the necessary condition of our attaining salvation; that alone which can procure God's love and favour toward us; that unto which all real blessings here, and all blifs hereafter are inseparably annexed: *Fear God* Eccl. 12. 13. *and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole of man;* the whole duty, the whole design, the whole perfection, the sum of our wisdom, and our happiness.) *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments: The righteous* Matt. 19. 27. *Lord loveth righteousness, his countenance doth behold the upright; God will* Psal. 11. 7. *render to every man according to his works;* these are Oracles indubitably clear, Prov. 15. 9. and infallibly certain; these are immoveable terms of justice between God and Man, (which never will, never can be relaxed; being grounded on the immutable nature of God, and eternal reason of things; if God had not decreed, Matt. 5. 18. if he had not said these things, they would not assuredly be true; for it is a Luke 16. 17. foul contradiction to reason, that a Man ever should please God without obeying him; 'tis a gross absurdity in nature, that a Man should be happy without being good; wherefore all the wit in the World cannot devise a way, all the authority upon Earth (yea, I dare say, even in Heaven itself) cannot establish a condition, beside faithful observance of God's Law, that can save, or make us happy; from it there can be no valid dispensation, without it there can be no effectual absolution, for it there can be no acceptable commutation; nor in defect thereof will any faith, any profession, any trick or pretence whatever avail, or signify any thing: Whatever expedient to supply its room superstition, mistake, craft, or presumption may recommend, we shall, relying thereon, be certainly deluded: If therefore we mean to be saved (and are we so wild as not to mean it?) if we do not renounce felicity (and do we not then renounce our wits?) to become virtuous, to proceed in a course of obedience, is a work that necessarily must be performed; and why then should we not instantly undertake it; wherefore do we demur or stick at it; how can we at all rest quiet, while an affair of so vast importance lieth upon our hands, or until our mind be freed of all uncertainty and suspense about it? Were a probable way suggested to us of acquiring great wealth, honour or pleasure, should we not quickly run about it, could we contentedly sleep, till we had brought the business to a sure or hopeless issue? and why with less expedition or urgency should we pursue the certain means of our present security and comfort, of our final salvation and happiness? in doing so, are we not strangely inconsistent with our selves?

Again, disobedience is the certain road to perdition; that which involveth us in guilt and condemnation, that which provoketh God's wrath and hatred against us, that which assuredly will throw us into a state of eternal sorrow and wretchedness: *The foolish shall not stand in God's sight, he hateth all the workers* Psal. 5. 5. *of iniquity; If ye do not repent, ye shall perish. The wicked shall be turned in-* Luke 13. 3. *to Hell, and all the people that forget God; The unrighteous shall not inherit the* Psal. 9. 17. *Kingdom of God; The wicked shall go into everlasting punishment;* these are denunciations no less sure than severe, from that mouth, which is never opened in vain; from the execution whereof there can be no shelter or refuge; And what wise man, what man in his right senses, would for one minute stand obnoxious to them? Who that any wise tendereth his own welfare would move one step forward in so perillous and destructive a course? the farther in which he proceedeth, the more he discometh from happiness, the nearer he approacheth to ruin.

In other cases common sense prompteth men to proceed otherwise; for who having rendred one his enemy, that far overmatcheth him, and at whose mercy he standeth, will not instantly sue to be reconciled? who being seized by a pernicious disease, will not haste to seek a cure? who being fallen into the jaws of a terrible danger, will not nimbly leap out thence? and such plainly is our case; while we persist in sin, we live in enmity and defiance with the Almighty, who can at his Pleasure crush us; we lie under a fatal plague, which, if we do not seasonably repent, will certainly destroy us; we incur the most dreadful of all hazards, abiding in the confines of death and destruction; God frowning at us, guilt holding us, Hell gaping for us: Every Sinner is (according to



Prov. 23. 34. the *Wise man's* expression) as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast; and he that is in such a case, is he not mad or senseless, if he will not forthwith labour to swim out thence, or make all speed to get down into a safer place? can any man with comfort lodge in a condition so dismally ticklish?

2. We may consider, that in order to our final welfare we have much work to dispatch, the which requireth as earnest care and painful industry, so a competent long time; which, if we do not presently fall on, may be wanting, and thence our work be left undone, or imperfect: To conquer and correct bad inclinations, to render our sensual appetites obsequious to reason, to compose our passions into a right and steady order, to cleanse our souls from vanity, from perverseness, from sloth, from all vicious distempers, and in their room to implant firm habits of virtue; to get a clear knowledge of our duty, with a ready disposition to perform it; in fine, to season our minds with holy affections, qualifying us for the presence of God, and conversation with the blessed Spirits above; these are things that must be done, but cannot be done in a trice; it is not *dictum factum*, as soon done as said; but *πομονὴ ἐργῶ ἀγαθῶν*, a patient continuance in well-doing is needful to achieve it; for it no time can be redundant, the longest life can hardly be sufficient: *Art is long, and life is short*, may be an Aphorism in *Divinity* as well as in *Physick*; the art of living well, of preserving our Soul's health, and curing its distempers, requireth no less time to compass it, than any other Art or Science.

*οὐ καὶ θύ-  
ρα εἰς ἡμῶν  
χορηγία βού-  
λευται ὁ Θεός,  
ἀλλὰ ποτε-  
ρῶντος. Chryf.  
ad Eph. 1. 27.  
κα.*

Virtue is not a Mushroom, that springeth up of it self in one Night, when we are asleep or regard it not: But a delicate Plant, that groweth slowly and tenderly, needing much pains to cultivate it, much care to guard it, much time to mature it, in our untoward soil, in this World's unkindly weather; happiness is a thing too precious to be purchased at an easie rate, Heaven is too high to be come at without much climbing; the crown of bliss is a Prize too noble to be won without a long and tough conflict. Neither is Vice a spirit, that will be conjured down by a charm, or with a *Presto* driven away; it is not an adversary, that can be knocked down at a blow, or dispatched with a stab. Whosoever shall pretend at any time easily with a celerity, by a kind of *Legerdemain*, or by any misterious knack, a Man may be settled in virtue, or converted from vice, common experience abundantly will confute him; which sheweth, that a habit otherwise (setting miracles aside) cannot be produced or destroyed, than by a constant exercise of acts sutable or opposite thereto; and that such acts cannot be exercised without voiding all impediments and framing all principles of action (such as temper of body, judgment of mind, influence of custom) to a compliance; that who by temper is peevish or cholerick, cannot without mastering that temper become patient or meek: that who from vain opinions is proud, cannot without considering away these opinions prove humble; that who by custom is grown intemperate, cannot without weaning himself from that custom come to be sober; that who from the concurrence of a lorry nature, fond conceits, mean breeding and scurvy usage is covetous; cannot without draining all those sources of his fault, be turned into liberal. The change of our mind is one of the greatest alterations in nature, which cannot be compassed in any way, or within any time we please; but it must proceed on leisurely and regularly, in such order, by such steps, as the nature of things doth permit; it must be wrought by a resolute and laborious perseverance; by a watchful application of mind in voiding Prejudices, in waiting for advantages, in attending to all we do; by forcible wresting our nature from its bent, and swimming against the current of impetuous desires; by a patient disentangling our selves from practices most agreeable and familiar to us; by a weary fencing with temptations, by long struggling with manifold oppositions and difficulties; whence the Holy Scripture termeth our practice a warfare, wherein we are to fight many a bloody battel with most redoubtable foes; a combat, which must be managed with our best skill, and utmost might; a race, which we must pass through with incessant activity and swiftness.

If therefore we mean to be good or to be happy, it becometh us to lose no time; to be presently up at our great task; to snatch all occasions, to embrace all means incident of reforming our hearts and lives. As those, who have



a long journey to go, do take care to set out early and in their way make good speed, lest the night overtake them before they reach their home; so it being a great way from hence to Heaven, seeing we must pass over so many obstacles, through so many Paths of duty before we arrive thither, it is expedient to set forward as soon as can be, and to proceed with all expedition; the longer we stay, the more time we shall need, and the less we shall have.

3. We may consider, that no future time which we can fix upon will be more convenient than the present is for our reformation. Let us pitch on what time we please, we shall be as unwilling and unfit to begin as we are now; we shall find in our selves the same indispositions, the same averfeness, or the same listlessness toward it as now. There will occur the like hardships to deter us, and the like Pleasures to allure us from our duty; objects will then be as present and will strike as smartly upon our senses; the case will appear just the same, and the same Pretences for delay will obtrude themselves; so that we shall be as apt then as now to prorogue the business. We shall say then, to morrow I will mend; and when that morrow cometh, it will be still to morrow, and so the morrow will prove endless. If like the simple Rustick, (who stay'd by the River side waiting till it had done running, that so he might pass dry-foot over the chanel) we do conceit, that the sources of sin (bad inclinations within, and strong temptations abroad) will of themselves be spent or fail, we shall find our selves deluded. If ever we come to take up, we must have a beginning with some difficulty and trouble; we must courageously break through the present with all its enchantments; we must undauntedly plunge into the cold stream; we must rouse our selves from our bed of sloth; we must shake off that brutish improvidence which detaineth us, and why should we not essay it now? there is the same reason now that ever we can have; yea, far more reason now; for if that we now begin, hereafter at any determinate time, some of the work will be done, what remaineth will be shorter and easier to us. Nay farther,

4. We may consider, that the more we defer, the more difficult and painful our work must needs prove; every day will both enlarge our task, and diminish our ability to perform it: Sin is never at a stay; if we do not retreat from it, we shall advance in it; and the farther on we go, the more we have to come back; every step we take forward, (even before we can return hither, into the state wherein we are at present) must be repeated; all the web we spin must be unravelled; we must vomit up all we take in; which to do we shall find very tedious and grievous.

Vice as it groweth in age, so it improveth in stature and strength; from a puny Child it soon waxeth a lusty Stripling, then riseth to be a sturdy Man, and after a-while becometh a massy Giant, whom we shall scarce dare to encounter, whom we shall be very hardly able to vanquish; especially seeing that as it groweth taller and stouter, so we shall dwindle and prove more impotent; for it feedeth upon our vitals, and thriveth by our decay; it waxeth mighty by stripping us of our best forces; by enfeebling our reason, by perverting our will, by corrupting our temper, by debasing our courage, by seducing all our appetites and passions to a treacherous compliance with it self; every day our mind groweth more blind, our will more resty, our spirit more faint, our appetites more fierce, our passions more headstrong and untameable; The power and empire of sin do strangely by degrees encroach, and continually get ground upon us, till it hath quite subdued and enthralled us; first we learn to bear it, then we come to like it, by and by we contract a friendship with it, then we dote upon it, at last we become enslaved to it in a bondage, which we shall hardly be able, or willing to shake off; when not only our necks are fitted to the yoke, our hands are manacled, and our feet shackled thereby; but our heads and hearts do conspire in a base submission thereto: When vice hath made such im-

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pression

Ἄλλ' ἔγωγε νῦν ἵομαι, δὴ γὰρ μέμλωκε  
μάλιστα ἡμᾶρ, ὅταν τάχα τοι ποτὶ  
ἑσπερα ῥίγιον ἔσται. Hom. Od. p.

Cras hoc fiet; idem cras fiet &c.  
Pref. Sat. 5.  
Qui non est hodie, cras minus aptus eris.  
Ovid. de Rom. I. Epict. 4. 12.

— qui recte vivendi prorogat horam,  
Rusticus expectat dum defluat annus, at ille  
Labitur, & labetur in omne volubilis ævum.  
Hor. Ep. I. 2.

Εἰ μὲν λυσίτελής ἢ ὑπέρθεσις ἐστίν, ἢ  
παντελής ἀπόστασις αὐτῆς ὅτι λυσίτελής  
ἐστίν. Epict. 4. 12.  
For the same reason we put it off  
should put it away. If it be good at all,  
it is good at present.

Παρεστὶ τὸ  
σήμερον ἡ  
μαρτυρία αὐ-  
τῶν ὅτι ἡ  
τάλλα χεῖ-  
ρ ἐν ἀνάγκῃ  
τοῦ παρῶν  
ἔχει. Epict.  
4. 12.

Falsis opinionibus tanto quisque infestior,  
quanto magis in eis familiarisque volutatur.  
Aug. Ep. 117.



pression on us, when this pernicious weed hath taken so deep root in our mind, will and affection, it will demand an extremely toilsome labour to extirpate it.

Indeed by continuance in sin, the chief means (afforded by nature, or by grace) of restraining, or reducing us from it, are either cut off, or enervated and rendred ineffectual.

Μεγιστον πρὸς ἀπερὺν βοήθημα ἡ αἰδώς, Greg. Naz. Or. 26.

Peccandi finem posuit sibi, quando recepit Ejectum semel attrita de fronte ruborem. Juv. Sat. 18.

Ezek. 2. 4.  
3. 7.  
Isa. 48. 4.  
Jer. 5. 3.  
Prov. 21. 29.  
Phil. 3. 19.

of the degenerate Jews, whom the Prophets call *impudent children*, having a brow of brass, and faces harder than a rock; so that they commit sin with open face, and in broad day, without any mask, without a blush; they despise their own reputation, and defy all censure of others; they outface and outbrave the World, till at length with prodigious insolence they come to boast of wickedness and glory in their shame, as an instance of high courage, and special gallantry.

Conscience is a check to beginners in sin, reclaiming them from it, and rating them for it; but this in long standers becometh useless, either failing to discharge its office, or assaying it to no purpose, having often been slighted, it will be weary of chiding; or if it be not wholly dumb, we shall be deaf to its reproof: As those who live by cataracts or downfalls of Water are by continual noise so deafened as not to hear or mind it, so shall we in time grow senseless, not regarding the loudest Peals and Ratlings of our conscience.

(Ezek. 2. 4.  
3. 7.  
Neh. 9. 29.  
2 Chron. 36.  
73.  
Dan. 5. 20.)  
Isa. 48. 4.  
Quo quis posuit se habet, minus sentit. Sen. Ep.  
53. Eph. 4. 19.

The Heart of a raw Novice in impiety is somewhat tender and soft, so that remorse can pierce and sting it; his neck is yielding and sensible, so that the yoke of sin doth gall it; but in stout Proficients the heart becometh hard and stony, the neck stiff and brawny; (an iron sinew, as the Prophet termeth it) so that they do not feel or resent any thing; but are like those of whom St. Paul speaketh; οἱ τινες ἀπηλυσάντες, who being past feeling all sorrow or smart, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

When first we nibble at the Bait, or enter into bad courses, our reason doth contest and remonstrate against it, faithfully representing to us the folly, the ugliness, the baseness, the manifold ill consequences of sinning; but that by continuance is muffled so as not to discern, or muzzled so as not to declare; yea, often is so debauched as to excuse, to avow and maintain, yea, to applaud and extol our miscarriages.

For a time a man retaineth some courage, and a hope that he may repent; but progress in sin dispiriteth and casteth into despair; whether God be placable, whether himself be corrigible; an apprehension concerning the length of the way, or the difficulty of the work discourageth, and despondency rendreth him heartless and careless to attempt it. There is no Man that hath heard of God, who hath not at first some dread of offending him, and some dissatisfaction in transgressing his will; it appearing to his mind (not yet utterly blinded and depraved) a desperate thing to brave his irresistible Power, an absurd thing to thwart his infallible Wisdom, a detestable thing to abuse his immense Goodness; but obstinacy in sin doth quash this conscientious awe; so that at length God is not in all his thoughts, the fear of God is not before his eyes; The Wrath of the Almighty seemeth a Bugbear, the fiercest menaces of Religion found but as Rattles to him.

Psal. 10. 4.  
36. 1.

As for the gentle Whispers and Touches of Divine Grace, the monitory Dispensations of Providence, the good advices and wholesome reproofs of Friends, with the like means of reclaiming sinners; these to Persons settled on their lees, or fixed in bad custome, are but as gusts of Wind brushing an old Oak, or as Waves dashing on a Rock, without at all shaking or stirring it.

Jer. 48. 11.  
Zeph. 1. 12.

Now when any Person is come to this pass, it must be hugely difficult to reduce him; to retrieve a deflowered Modesty, to quicken a jaded Conscience, to supple a callous Heart, to resettle a baffled Reason, to rear a dejected Courage,



to recover a Soul miserably benumbed and broken, to its former vigour and integrity; can be no easie matter.

The diseases of our Soul no less than those of our Body, when once they are inveterate, they are become more incurable; the longer we forbear to apply due remedy, the more hard their cure will prove; if we let them proceed far, we must, e'er we can be rid of them, undergo a course of Physick very tedious and offensive to us; many a rough Purge, many a sore Phlebotomy, many an irksome sweat we must endure. Yea farther,

5. We may consider, that by delaying to amend, to do it may become quite impossible; it may be so in the nature of the thing, it may be so by the will of God: The thing may become naturally impossible; for vice by custom may pass into nature, and prove so congenial, as if it were born with us; so that we shall propend to it as a stone falleth down, or as a spark flieth upward: By soaking in Voluptuousness we may be so transformed into Brutes, by sleeping in malice so converted into Fiends, that we necessarily shall act like creatures of that kind, into which we are degenerated; and then in no-wise without a downright Miracle are we capable of being reformed. *How long,*

*saith Solomon, wilt thou sleep, O Sluggard, when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?*

We may be so often called on, and 'tis not easie to awaken us, when we are got into a spiritual slumber; but when we are *dead in trespasses and sins*, so that all breath of holy affection is stopt, and no spiritual pulse from our heart doth appear; that all sense of duty is lost, all appetite to good doth fail, no strength or activity to move in a good course doth exert it self, that our good complexion is dissolved, and all our finer spirits are dissipated, that our mind is quite crazed, and all its Powers are shattered or spoiled; when thus, I say, we are spiritually dead, how can we raise our selves, what beneath omnipotency can effect it? as a stick, when once 'tis dry and stiff, you may break it, but you can never bend it into a freighter posture, so doth the Man become incorrigible, who is settled and stiffened in vice. The stain of habitual sin may sink in so deep, and so thoroughly tincture all our Soul, that we may be like those People, of whom the Prophet saith, *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots? then may ye do good, that are accustomed to do evil:* Such an impossibility may arise from nature; one greater and more insuperable may come from God.

To an effectual repentance the succour of divine grace is necessary; but that is arbitrarily dispensed; *the Spirit bloweth where it listeth*, yet it listeth wisely, with regard both to the past behaviour, and present capacities of Men; so that to such who have abused it, and to such who will not treat it well, it shall not be imparted: And can we be well assured, can we reasonably hope, that after we by our presumptuous delays have put off God and dallied with his grace; after that he long in vain hath waited to be gracious; after that he hath endured so many neglects, and so many repulses from us; after that we frequently have slighted his open invitations, and smothered his kindly motions in us; in short, after we so unworthily have misused his goodness and patience, that he farther will vouchsafe his grace to us? when we have forfeited it, when we have rejected it, when we have spurned and driven it away, can we hope to recover it?

There is a time, a season, a day allotted to us; *our day* it is termed, *a day of salvation, the season of our visitation, an acceptable time*; wherein God freely doth exhibit grace, and presenteth his mercy to us; if we let this day slip, *the night cometh when no man can work*; when *the things belonging to our peace will be hidden from our eyes*; when (as the Prophet expresseth it) we shall *grope for the wall like the blind, and stumble at noon day as in the night, and be in desolate places as dead men*; after that day is spent, and that comfortable light is set, a dismal night of darkness, of cold, of disconsolateness will succeed; when God being weary of bearing with Men doth utterly desert them, and delivereth them over to a reprobate mind; when subtracting his gracious direction and assistance, he giveth them over to their own hearts lusts, and to walk in their own counsels; when they are brought to complain with those in the Prophet, *O Lord, why*

— *frustra medicina paratur,  
Cum mala per longas invaluere moras.*  
Ovid.

Ῥῶν δ' π' ἀρχῆς μὴ ἐνδύσαι κακία,  
ἢ περσιῦσαν διαφυγεῖν, ἢ περβαίνουσιν  
ἀνὰ νότον. Greg. Naz. Orat. 26.

Ἐπειδὴν εἰς φρενίτην ἐκπεσόντες λακ-  
τίσωσι καὶ δάκρυσι τὰς ἐυλομήδους ἀπα-  
λάξαι τ' ἀρρώστιας αὐτῶν, τότε νοσήσιν  
ἀνίατα. Chrys. in Babyl. Orat. 2.

Prov. 6. 9.

Eph. 2. 1.

Apoc. 3. 1.

1 Tim. 5. 6.

Frangas citius

quam corrigas

qua in pravius

induerimus.

Quintil. 1. 3.

Jer. 13. 23.

John 3. 8.

Τὸ πνεῦμα δ'

χρεῖται τὸ ἐν-

εἶρας.

Heb. 10. 29.

Ἀδύνατον.

Heb. 6. 4.

Luke 19. 42.

44.

2 Cor. 6. 2.

Heb. 3. 13.

John. 9. 4.

Luke 19. 42.

Isa. 59. 10.

Jer. 15. 6.

Mal. 2. 17.

If. 1. 14 7. 13.

Rom. 1. 24.

26. 28.

Psal. 81. 12.

Isa. 63. 17.

why



- why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? when like Pharaoh they survive only as objects of God's justice, or occasions to glorify his power; when like Esau, they cannot find a place of repentance, although they seek it carefully with tears; when as to the foolish loitering Virgins, the door of mercy is shut upon them; when the master of the house doth rise and shut the door, &c. when that menace of divine wisdom cometh to be executed; They shall call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not chuse the fear of the Lord: And if neglecting our season, and present means, we once fall into this state, then is our case most deplorable; we are dead Men irreversibly doomed, and only for a few moments reprieved from the stroke of final vengeance; we are vessels of wrath fitted (or made up) for destruction; by a fatal blindness and obduration sealed up to ruin; we are like the *terra damnata*, that earth (in the Apostle,) which drinking up the rain, that cometh oft upon it, and bearing thorns and briars, is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, and whose end is to be burned. Wherefore according to the advice of the Prophet, Seek ye the Lord, when he may be found, call ye upon him, while he is near.
- Rom. 9. 17. Heb. 13. 17. Matt. 25. 10. Luke 13. 25. Prov. 1. 28. Rom. 9. 22. Κατηρητισ-  
μῶς αἰσ ἀπώ-  
λειαν. Heb. 6. 7. 8. Isa. 55. 6.

- It is true, that God is ever ready upon our true conversion to receive us into favour, that his arms are always open to embrace a sincere Penitent; that he hath declared, whenever a wicked man turneth from his wickedness, and doeth that which is right, he shall save his soul alive; that if we do wash our selves, make us clean, put away the evil of our doings, and cease to do evil, then although our sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow, though they be like crimson they shall be as wool; that if we rend our hearts, and turn unto the Lord, he is gracious and merciful, and will repent of the evil; that God is good and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all that call upon him; that whenever a prodigal son with humble confession and hearty contrition for his sin doth arise and go to his father, he will embrace him tenderly, and entertain him kindly; that even a profane Apostate, and a bloody Oppressor (as Manasses) a lewd Strumpet (as Magdalene) a notable Thief (as he upon the Cross) a timorous Renouncer (as St. Peter) a furious Persecutor (as St. Paul) a stupid Idolater (as all the Heathen World, when the Gospel came to them, was) the most heinous Sinner that ever hath been, or can be imagined to be, if he be disposed to repent, is capable of mercy; those declarations and promises are infallibly true, those instances peremptorily do evince, that repentance is never superannuated; that if we can turn at all, we shall not turn too late; that *penitentia nunquam sera, modo seria*, is an irrefragable rule; yet nevertheless delay is very unsafe; for what assurance can we have, that God hereafter will enable us to perform those conditions of bewailing our sins, and forsaking them? have we not cause rather to fear that he will chastise our presumption by withholding his Grace? for although God faileth not to yield competent aids to Persons who have not despised his goodness and long-suffering that leadeth them to repentance; yet he that wilfully or wantonly loitereth away the time, and squandereth the means allowed him; who refuseth to come when God calleth, yea woeth and courteth him to repentance, how can he pretend to find such favour?
- Ezek. 18. 27. Isa. 1. 18. Joel 2. 13. Psal. 86. 5. Luke 15. 18. Vid. Chrys. ad Theod. 2. Judas (saith he there) was capable of pardon. Rom. 2. 4.

We might add, that supposing God in superabundance of mercy might be presumed never to withhold his grace; yet seeing his grace doth not work by irresistible compulsion; seeing the worse qualified we are, the more apt we shall be to cross and defeat its operation; seeing that we cannot hope that hereafter we shall be more fit than now to comply with it: Yea seeing we may be sure, that after our hearts are hardened by perseverance in sin, we shall be more indisposed thereto; we by delay of repentance do not only venture the forfeiture of divine grace, but the danger of abusing it, which heinously will aggravate our guilt, and hugely augment our punishment.

- We should do well therefore most seriously to regard the Apostle's admonition; Exhort one another to day, while it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin: Now that we find our selves invited to repent, now that we apprehend so much reason for it; now that we feel our hearts somewhat enclined thereto; now that we have time in our hands, and are not barr'd from hopes of mercy; now that it is not extremely difficult, or not absolutely
- Heb. 3. 13.



olutely impossible, let us in God's name lay hold on the occasion, let us speedily and earnestly set upon the work. Farther yet,

6. We should consider, that we are mortal and frail, and thence any designs of future reformation may be clipt off, or intercepted by death; which is always creeping toward us, and may for all we can tell be very near at hand. You say you will repent to morrow; but are you sure you shall have a morrow to repent in? have you an hour in your hand, or one minute at your disposal? have you a lease to shew for any term of life; can you claim or reckon upon the least portion of time without his leave, who bestoweth life, and dealeth out time, and ordereth all things as he pleaseth? Can you any wise descry the just measure of your days, or the bounds of your appointed time, without a special revelation from him, in whose hands is your breath; and with whom alone the number of your months is registred? Boast not thy self of to morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth, saith the Wise-man: boast not of it, that is, do not pretend it to be at thy disposal, presume not upon any thing that may befall therein; for whilst thou presumest thereon, may it not be said unto thee, as to the rich Projectour in the Gospel, \* *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee.* Doth not, secluding hidden decrees, every Man's life hang upon a thread very slender and frail? is it not subject to many diseases lurking within, and to a thousand accidents flying about us? how many, that might have promised themselves as fair scope as we can, have been unexpectedly snapt away? How many have been cropt in the flower of their age and vigour of their strength? Doth not every day present experiments of sudden death? Do we not continually see that observation of the Preacher verified, *Man knoweth not his time; as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it cometh suddenly upon them?* Old men are ready to drop of themselves, and young men are easily brushed or shaken down; the former visibly stand upon the brink of Eternity, the latter walk upon a bottomless Quag, into which unawares they may slump; who then can anywise be secure? We are all therefore highly concerned to use our life, while we have it; to catch the first opportunity, lest all opportunity forsake us; to cut off our sinning, lest our selves be cut off before it: And that the rather, because by lavishing, or misemploying our present time, we may lose the future, provoking God to bereave us of it; for as prolongation of time is a reward of Piety; as to observance of the Commandments it is promised, *Length of days, and long life, and peace shall be added unto thee;* so being immaturally snatched hence is the punishment awarded to impious practice; so it is threatned that *Evil men shall be cut off; that bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; that God will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his wickedness:* the very being unmindful of their duty is the cause, why men are thus surpris'd; for, *If, saith God, thou dost not watch, I shall come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know when I come upon thee.* And *If (saith our Lord) that servant doth say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming, &c. The Lord of that servant will come in a day, when he looketh not for him, &c.*

If then it be certain, that we must render a strict account of all our doings here; if by reason of our frail nature and slippery state, it be uncertain when we shall be summoned thereto; if our negligence may abridge and accelerate the term, is it not very reasonable to observe those advices of our Lord; *Watch, for ye do not know the day, nor the hour, when the son of man cometh; Take heed to your selves, lest at any time your heart be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.* Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning, and ye your selves like men that wait for your Lord: And to take the counsel of the Wise-man, *Make no tarrying to turn unto the Lord, and put not off from day to day; for suddenly shall the wrath of the Lord come forth, and in thy security shalt thou be destroyed, and perish in the day of vengeance.*

These

*Qui poenitenti veniam spondit, peccanti si crastinum diem non promittit. Greg. in Evang. Hom. IX.*

*Job 12. 16.*

*14. 5. 7. 1.*

*Psal. 39. 4. 90*

*12.*

*Dan. 5. 23.*

*Prov. 27. 1.*

*Οὐκ ἴσθαι τί*

*τίξεται ἡ ἐπι-*

*στα. μή*

*ὑπαγγέλῃ*

*τά μὴ σά.*

*Bat. M. exh.*

*ad Bapt.*

*\* Luke 12. 16.*

*Ecclef. 9. 12.*

*Τί θ' οἶδας ἀνθρώπου ἀμαρτίας, εἰ ἡμέρας ζήσῃς ἐν τῷ σάτι, ἢ αὐτὸν μετανοήσῃ, &c.*

*\* Οὐτὶ ἀδελφὸς ἡ ἐξοδὸς οὐ ἐν τῷ βίῳ ὑπάρχει, ἀλλ' ἐν ἀμαρτίᾳ τελευτῶντι μετανοοῖα ἐν ἔσῃ, &c. Const. Ap. 2. 12.*

*Prov. 3. 2.*

*Psal. 37. 9.*

*Psal. 55. 23.*

*Psal. 68. 21.*

*Rev. 3. 3.*

*16. 5.*

*Luke 12. 45.*

*46.*

*Matt. 25. 13.*

*24. 42.*

*Mark 13. 33.*

*Luke 12. 15.*

*35.*

*Ecclef. 5. 7.*



These considerations plainly do shew how very foolish, how extremely dangerous and destructive the procrastinating our reformation of life is: there are some others of good moment, which we shall reserve.

## S E R M O N XVII.

### The Danger and Mischief of delaying Repentance.

P S A L. cxix. 60.

*I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy Commandments.*

**I** Proceed to the Considerations which yet remain to be spoken to.

1. We may consider the causes of delay in this case (as in all cases of moment) to be bad and unworthy of a Man: What can they be but either stupidity, that we do not apprehend the importance of the affair; or improvidence, that we do not attend to the danger of persisting in sin; or negligence, that we do not mind our concerns; or sloth, that keepeth us from rowling and bestirring our selves in pursuance of what appeareth expedient; or faint-heartedness and cowardice, that we dare not attempt to cross our appetite, or our fancy? all which dispositions are very base and shameful: It is the prerogative of humane nature to be sagacious in estimating the worth, and provident in descrying the consequences of things; whereas other creatures, by impulse of sense, do only fix their regard on present appearances; which peculiar excellency by stupidity and improvidence we forfeit, degenerating into brutes; and negligence of that, which we discern mainly to concern us is a quality somewhat beneath those, depressing us below beasts, which cannot be charged with such a fault; sloth is no less despicable, rendring a man fit for nothing; nor is there any thing commonly more reproachful than want of courage: so bad are the causes of delay.

2. And the effects are no less unhappy, being disappointment, damage, trouble and sorrow: As expedition (catching advantages and opportunities, keeping the spirit up in its heat and vigour, making forcible impressions where-ever it lighteth, driving on the current of success) doth subdue business, and achieve great exploits (as by practising his Motto, *to defer nothing*, Alexander did accomplish those mighty feats which make such a clatter in story; and Caesar more by the rapid quickness and forwardness of undertaking, than by the greatness of courage, and skilfulness of conduct, did work out those enterprises, which purchased to his Name so much glory and renown) so delay and slowness do spoil all business, do keep off success at distance from us, thereby opportunity is lost, and advantages slip away; our courage doth flag, and our spirit languisheth; our endeavours strike faintly, and are easily repelled; whence disappointment necessarily doth spring, attended with vexation.

3. Again, we may consider, that to set upon our duty is a great step toward the performance of it; if we can resolve well, and a little push forward, we are in a fair way to dispatch; *to begin* (they say) *is to have half done*; to set out, is a good part of the journey; to rise betimes, is oftner harder than to do all the day's work; entering the Town, is almost the same with taking it; it is so in all business, it is chiefly so in moral practice: For if we can find in our hearts to take our leave of sin, if

we

Αργίας πρὸς  
φασίς ἢ ἀνα-  
κολῆ, Simpl.

Animal hoc pro-  
vidum, sagax,  
Cic. de leg. 1.  
Cic. de off. 1.

Μηδὲν ἀνα-  
καλλῶμεθα.  
Successus urge-  
re suos, instare,  
Cic. Luc. 1.

Plerisque in rebus tarditas & procrastina-  
tio odiosa est. Cic. Philip. 6.

Ἄπει δ' ἀμβολιστοῦς ἀνὴρ ἀτρεὶς πα-  
λαίει. Hes.  
Dum deliberamus quando incipiendum est,  
incipere jam serum est. Quint. 12. 7.

Dimidium facti qui capis habes.

Hor. Ep. 1. 2.

Μόνον ἀρχὴν ἐπιδίς τοῦ πρὸς γυμνασίου.  
Cic. Chryl. Tom. 6. Orat. p. 68.

Τὸ δυσχερὲς καὶ δυσκατόρθωτον ὅτι  
ἐστὶ, τὸ δυνατὸν ἐπιβῆναι τὸ εὐδαιμονίαν  
καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἀλγεῖς τὸ μετανοῆσαι. Ib.  
p. 79.



we can disengage our selves from the witcheries of present allurements; if we can but get over the threshold, of virtuous conversation, we shall find the rest beyond expectation smooth and expedite; we shall discover such beauty in virtue, we shall taste so much sweetness in obedience, as greatly will encourage us to proceed therein.

*Honestas, qua principio anxia habetur, ubi contigerit voluptati luxuriaque habetur. Vict. in Sept. Sev.*

4. Again, we may consider, that our time it self is a gift, or a talent committed to us, for the improvement whereof we are responsible no less than for our Wealth, our Power, our Credit, our Parts, and other such advantages, wherewith for the serving of God, and furthering our own salvation we are intrusted: *To redeem the time* is a Precept; and of all Precepts the most necessary to be observed, for that without redeeming (that is embracing and well employing) time we can do nothing well; no good action can be performed, no good reward can be procured by us: Well may we be advised to take our best care in husbanding it, seeing justly of all things it may be reckoned most precious; its price being inestimable, and its loss irreparable; for all the World cannot purchase one Moment of it more than is allowed us, neither can it, when once gone, by any means be recovered: So much indeed as we save thereof, so much we preserve of our selves; and so far as we lose it, so far in effect we slay our selves, or deprive our selves of life; yea by mispending it we do worse than so; for a dead sleep, or cessation from being, is not so bad as doing ill; all that while we live backward, or decline toward a state much worse than annihilation it self. Farther

*Eph. 5. 16. Col. 4. 5.*

*Πολυτελής α- τον άνδρωμα.*

5. Consider, that of all time the present is ever the best for the purpose of amending our life: It is the only sure time, that which we have in our hands, and may call our own; whereas the past time is irrevocably gone from us; and the future may never come to us: It is absolutely (reckoning from our becoming sensible of things, and accountable for our actions) the best, as to our capacity of improving it;

*Omnia qua ventura sunt in incerto jacent, proximus vivit. Sen. de vit. brev. 9.*

*Optima quaque dies miseris mortalibus ævi Prima fugit.*

*Virg. Georg. 3.*

Our best days do first pass away, was truly said; the nearer to its source our life is, the purer it is from stain, the freer from clogs, the more susceptible of good impressions, the more vivid and brisk in its activity; the farther we go on, especially in a bad course, the nearer we verge to the dregs of our life; the more dry, the more stiff, the more sluggish we grow; delay therefore doth ever steal away the flower of our age, leaving us the bran and refuse thereof. Again,

6. If at any time we do reflect upon the time that hath already slipped away unprofitably from us, it will seem more than enough, and (if we consider well) it will be grievous to us to lose more; the morrow will seem too late to commence a good life; *ἀρετὴς δὲ παρεληλυθὸς χρόνου*, *The time past of our life* (saith St. Peter) *may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles*, or to have continued in ill courses; more indeed it might than suffice; it should be abundantly too much to have imbezelled so large a portion of our precious and irreparable time: After we have slept in neglect of our duty, *ὥστε ἥδη ἐγερθῆναι*, it is (as St. Paul saith) *now high time to awake*, unto a vigilant observance thereof: this we shall the rather do, if we consider, that

*Sera nimis vita est crastina, vivit hodie.*

*Matt. 1. 19. 1 Pet. 4. 3.*

*Rom. 13. 11.*

7. For ill living now we shall come hereafter to be sorry, if not with a wholesome contrition, yet with a painful regret; we shall certainly one day repent, if not of our sin, yet of our sinning; if not so as to correct for the future, yet so as to condemn our selves for what is past: the consideration of our having sacrilegiously robb'd our Maker of the time due to his service; of our having injuriously defrauded our souls of the opportunities granted to secure their welfare; of our having profusely cast away our most precious hours of life upon vanity and folly, will sometime twitch us sorely. There is no man who doth not with a sorrowful eye review an ill-past life; who would not gladly recal his mis-spent time; *O mihi prateritos!* O that God would re-



store my past years to me, is every such Man's Prayer, although it never was heard, never could be granted unto any. And what is more inconsistent with wisdom, than to engage our selves upon making such ineffectual and fruitless wishes? What is more disagreeable to reason, than to do that, for which we must be forced to confess and call our selves fools? What Man of sense for a flash of transitory Pleasure, for a puff of vain repute, for a few scraps of dirty Pelf would plunge himself into such a gulf of anguish?

*Ille sapit quisquis, Posthume, vixit heri.*  
Mart. 5. 60.

*Ampliat aetatis spatium sibi vir bonus, hoc  
est.*  
*Vivere bis, vita posse priore frui.*  
Mart. 10. 23.

Rom. 2.

*Quam magna  
deliquimus  
tam granditer  
desseamus, &c.*  
Cypr. de Laps.  
Or. 5.

8. On the contrary, if laying hold on occasion, we set our selves to do well, reflexion thereon will yield great satisfaction and pleasure to us; we shall be glad that we have done, and that our task is over; we shall *enjoy our former life*; Our time which is so past will not yet be lost unto us; but rather it will be most securely ours, laid up beyond the reach of danger, in the repository of a good conscience.

Rom. 2.

9. Again, all our time of continuance in sin we do *treasure up wrath*, or accumulate guilt; and the larger our guilt is, the sorer must be our repentance; the more bitter the sorrow, the more low the humbling, the more earnest the deprecation requisite to obtain pardon; the broader and deeper the stain is, the more washing is needful to get it out; if we sin much and long, we must grieve answerably, or we shall be no fit objects of mercy.

Rom. 2.

*Quam magna  
deliquimus  
tam granditer  
desseamus, &c.*  
Cypr. de Laps.  
Or. 5.

10. And whenever the sin is pardoned, yet indelible marks and monuments thereof will abide. We shall eternally be obliged to cry *peccavi*; although the punishment may be remitted, the desert of it cannot be removed; a scar from it will stick in our flesh, which ever will deform us; a tang of it will stay in our memory, which always will be disgustful; we shall never reflect on our miscarriages without some confusion and horror; incessantly we shall be liable to that question of

*Pœna potest dari, culpa perennis erit.*  
Ovid.

*Ἡ συγχώρησις ἐμύνητο τῆς ἀμαρτημάτων  
τῶν τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἡ μνήμη τῆς συγχωρη-  
μένων ἀμαρτημάτων ἐκ ἡφαι-  
ζέτο τοῦ Παύλου.* Chryl. Tom. 8.  
p. 97.

Rom. 6. 21.

St. Paul, *What fruit had ye of those things, whereof ye are now ashamed?* If therefore we could reasonably presume, yea if we could certainly foresee, that we should hereafter in time repent, yet it were unadvisable to persist in sin, seeing it being once committed, can never be reversed; never expunged from the registers of time, never dashed out from the tables of our mind and memory; but will perpetually rest as matter of doleful consideration, and of tragical story to us. *Then shalt thou remember thy ways, and be ashamed. That thou mayst remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God: Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loath your selves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations.*

Ezek. 16. 61.  
Ezek. 16. 63.

Ezek. 36. 31.  
20. 43.

1 Cor. 15. 41.

Prov. 1. 18.

11. Again, so much time as we spend in disobedience, so much of reward we do forfeit; for commensurate to our works shall our rewards be; the fewer our good works are in the course of our present life, the smaller shall be the measures of joy, of glory, of felicity dispensed to us hereafter; the later consequently we repent, the less we shall be happy: *One star* (saith the *Apostle*) *differeth from another in glory*; and of all stars, those in the celestial sphere will shine brightest, who did soon rise here, and continued long by the lustre of their good works to glorify their heavenly Father; for *the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day*. While therefore we let our interest lie dead by lingring, or run behind by sinful practice, we are very bad husbands for our soul; our spiritual estate doth thereby hugely suffer; every minute contracteth a damage that runneth through millions of ages, and which therefore will amount to an immense sum: And who for all the pleasures here would forego one degree of blissful joy hereafter; who for all earthly splendours would exchange one spark of celestial glory; who for all the treasures below would let slip one gem out of his heavenly crown?

12. Far-



12. Farther, let us consider that whatever our age, whatever our condition or case be, the advice not to procrastinate our obedience is very suitable and useful.

Art thou young? then it is most proper to enter upon living well. For when we set out, we should be put in a right way; when we begin to be Men, we should begin to use our reason well; life and virtue should be of the same standing; what is more ugly than a Child, that hath learnt little, having learnt to do ill; than naughtiness springing up in that state of innocence? The foundation of good life is to be laid in that age, upon which the rest of our life is built; for this is the manner of our proceeding; the present dependeth always upon what is past; our practice is guided by notions that we had sucked in, is swayed by inclinations that we got before; whence usually our first judgments of things, and our first propensions do stretch their influence upon the whole future life. *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it, saith the Wise-man.* Sub pedagogo coepit licet, serium est. Matt. 8. 44. Prov. 22. 6.

That age as it is most liable to be corrupted by vice, so it is most capable of being imbued with virtue; then nature is soft and pliable, so as easily to be moulded into any shape, ready to admit any stamp impressed thereon; then the mind is a pure table, in which good principles may be fairly engraven, without rasing out any former ill prejudices; then the heart being a soil free of weeds, the seeds of goodness being cast therein will undisturbedly grow and thrive; then the complexion being tender will easily be set into a right posture; Our soul is then a Vessel empty and sweet; good liquor therefore may be instilled, which will both fit it, and season it with a durable tincture; the extream curiosity and huge credulity of that age, as they greedily will swallow any, so will they admit good instruction. If we do then imbibe false conceptions, or have bad impressions made on our minds, it will be hard afterwards to expel, or to correct them. Passion is then very fluid and moveable, but not being impetuously determined any way, may easily be derived into the right chanel. Then the quickness of our wit, the briskness of our fancy, the freshness of our memory, the vigour of our affections, the lusty and active mettle of our spirits being applied to virtuous studies and endeavours, will produce most noble fruits; the beauty of which will adorn us, the sweetness will please us, so as to leave on our minds a perpetual relish and satisfaction in goodness. Then being less encumbered with the cares, less intangled in the perplexities, less exposed to the temptations of the World and secular affairs, we can more easily set forth, we may proceed more expeditely in good courses. Then being void of that stinging remorse, which doth adhere to reflexions upon past follies, and mis-spent time, with more courage and alacrity we may prosecute good undertakings; then beginning so soon to embrace virtue, we shall have advantage with more leisure, and more ease to polish and perfect it through our ensuing course of life; setting out so early, in the very morning of our age, without much straining, marching on softly and fairly, we may go through our journey to happiness.

Our actions then are the first fruits of our life, which therefore are fit and due sacrifices to our Maker; which if we do withdraw, we shall have nothing left so worthy or acceptable to present unto him; will it be seemly to offer him the dregs and refuse of our age; shall we not be ashamed to bring a crazy temper of body and soul, dry bones and decayed senses; a dull fancy, a treacherous memory, a sluggish spirit before him? shall we then when we are fit for little begin to undertake his service? with our decrepit limbs and wasted strength shall we set our selves to *run the ways of his commandments?*

*Natura tenacissimi sumus eorum quae rudibus annis percipimus, &c. Quint. 1. 1. Difficulus eraditur quod rudes animi percipiunt. Hier. ad Lætam.*

*Ut corpora ad quosdam membrorum flexus formari nisi tenera non possunt, sic animos ad plerumque duriores robur ipsum facit. Quint. ib. Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem Testa diu.*

*Hor. Ep. 1. 2.*

*Ἡ δὲ ὅτι χαλεπὸν ἢ νεότης, ὅτι δειπνιστὸν, ὅτι δεξαμένη, ὅτι δόλιγον, καὶ σφοδρτέρῃ δὲ χαλινῷ. Chrys. ἀνδρ. α'.*



As it is uncomfortable to think of being parsimonious, when our stock is almost gone; so it is to become thrifty of our life, when it comes near the bottom. Δεὴν ἐνὶ πνυθμῶνι φειδῶ.

If we keep innocency, spend our youth well, it will yield unexpressible comfort to us; it will save us much sorrow, it will prevent many inconveniences to us: If we have spent it ill, it will yield us great displeasure, it will cost us much pains; we shall be forced sadly to bewail our folly and vanity therein; it will be bitter to see, that we must unlive our former life, and undoe all we have done; that we must renounce the Principles we have avowed, we must root out the habits we have planted, we must forsake the Paths which we have beaten and so long trod in, if ever we will be happy; it will be grievous to us, when we come with penitential regret to deprecate, *Lord remember not the sins of my youth*; we shall feel sore pain, when our bones are full of the sins of our youth, and we come to possess the iniquities thereof.

Psal. 37. 38.

Psal. 25. 7.

Job. 20. 11.

13. 26.

Lam. 3. 27.

Fingit equum tenera docilem cervicis Ma-

gister

Ira viam, quam monstrat eques. — Hor.

Ep. 12. 1.

Eth. 1. 3.

Τῆς πολιτικῆς καὶ ὅταν οἰκεῖται ἀρετα-

της ὁ νόμος ἀπειροῦ καὶ ἡ καὶ βίον

πράξεων ἐπὶ τοῖς πράξεσιν ἀκολουθεῖ

καὶ ἀν ματαίως ἀκρίβεται καὶ ἀνωφελεῖ.

It is therefore good (as the Prophet saith) that a man bear the yoke in his youth, when his neck is tender; it is excellent advice which the Preacher giveth, *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them.*

Aristotle saith, that young men are not fit bearers of moral doctrine, because (saith he) they are unexperienced in affairs of life; and because they are apt to follow their passions, which indispose to hear with fruit or profit; but his conclusion is false, and his reasons may be well turned against him; for because young men want experience, therefore is there no bad prejudice, no contrary habit to obstruct their embracing sound doctrine; because their passions are vehement and strong, therefore being rightly ordered, and set upon good objects they with great force will carry them to virtuous practice; that indeed is the best time to regulate and tame Passions; as Horses must be broken when they are Colts, Dogs must be made when they are Whelps, else they will never be brought to any thing. The Poet therefore advised better than the Philosopher

Hor. Ep. 1. 2.

—nunc adhibe puro

Pectore verba puer, nunc te melioribus offer;

Eph. 6. 4.

Tit. 2. 6.

2 Tim. 2. 22.

2 Tim. 3. 15.

Psal. 119. 9.

Prov. 1. 4.

Prov. 22. 6, 15.

1 Pet. 2. 2.

Luke 18. 16.

Eth. 2. 2.

and St. Paul plainly doth confute him, when he biddeth Parents to educate their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; when he chargeth Titus, that he exhort young men to be sober-minded; when he commendeth Timothy, for that he had ἀπὸ βεβήτων from his infancy known the Holy Scriptures; So doth the Psalmist, when he saith, *Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed according to thy word.* And Solomon, when he declareth that his moral Precepts did serve to give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion; when he biddeth us to train up a child in the way he should go; St. Peter doth intimate the same, when he biddeth us, as new born babes to desire the sincere milk of the word; and our Saviour, when he said, *Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of God*; that is, the more Simplicity and Innocence a Man is endued with, the more apt he is to embrace and comply with the Evangelical Doctrine: Aristotle therefore was out, when he would exclude young Men from the Schools of Virtue. It is observable that he contradiceth himself; for Ὅτι μικρὸν διαφέρει τὸ ἔταος ἢ ἔταος, ἐπὶ οὗτοι οὐκ ἐνὶ ἐξέτασιν, ἀλλὰ παμπάλω, μᾶλλον δὲ τὸ πᾶν. It is (saith he) of no small concernment to be from youth accustomed thus or thus; yea, 'tis very much, or rather all: And how shall a young Man be accustomed to do well, if he be not allowed to learn what is to be done?

Again, are we old? it is then high time to begin; we have then less time to spare from our most important Business; we stand then in most imminent Danger, upon the Edge of Perdition, and should therefore be nimble to skip out thence; our Forces being diminished, our Quickness and Industry should be en-



encreased; the later we set out, the more speed it behoveth us to make. If we stay, we shall grow continually more indisposed and unfit to amend; it will be too late, when utter Decrepitnes and Dotage have seized upon us; and our Body doth survive our Soul. When so much of our Time, of our Parts, of our Strength are fled, we should husband the rest to best advantage, and make the best satisfaction we can unto God, and unto our Souls with the Remainder.

This Age hath some peculiar Advantages, which we should embrace: the Froth of Humours is then boiled out, the Fervours of Lust are slack'd, Passions are allay'd, Appetites are flatted; so that then Inclinations to sin are not so violent, nor doth the Enjoyment thereof so much gratifie.

Long Experience then hath discovered the Vanity of all worldly things, and the Mischief of ill Courses; so that we can then hardly admire any thing, or be fond of enjoying what we have found unprofitable or hurtful.

Age is excus'd from Compliance with the Fashions, and thence much exempted from Temptations of the World; so that it may be good without Obstacle or Opposition.

It is proper thereto to be grave and serious, and consequently to be virtuous; for Gravity without Virtue and Seriousness about vain things are ridiculous.

Nothing doth so adorn this Age as Goodness, nothing doth so disgrace it as Wickedness; *The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness*; but it is a mark of Infamy, if it be observed proceeding in a course of Iniquity, it signifieth that Experience hath not improved it, it argueth incorrigible Folly, or rather incurable Madnes therein.

There is indeed no Care, no Employment proper for old Men but to prepare for their Dissolution; to be bidding adieu to the World with its vain Poms and mischievous Pleasures; the packing up their Goods, to be casting their Accounts, to be fitting themselves to abide in that State into which they are tumbling, to appear at that Bar, before which suddenly Nature will set them. As a Ship which hath long been toss'd and Weather-beaten, which is shattered in its Timber, and hath lost much of its Rigging, should do nothing in that case but work toward the Port, there to find its Safety and Ease; so should a Man, who having past many Storms and Agitations of the World is grievously battered and torn with Age, strive only to die well, to get safe into the Harbour of eternal Rest.

In fine, *Epicurus* himself said well, that *no man is either immature or over-ripe in regard to his soul's health*; we can never set upon it too soon, we should never think it too late to begin; to live well is always the best thing we can do, and therefore we should at any time endeavour it; there are common Reasons for all Ages, there are special Reasons for each Age, which most strongly and most clearly do urge it; it is most seasonable for young Men, it is most necessary for old Men, it is most adviseable for all Men \*.

*omnis aetas (neque enim recta voluntati ferum est tempus ullum) sociis membris huc tendamus, in hoc elaboremus, forsan & consummare contingat. Quint. 12. 1.*

Again, be our Condition what it will, this Advice is reasonable: Are we in Health? we owe God Thanks for that excellent Gift, and the best Gratitude we can express is the improving it for his Service and to our own Good; we should not lose the Advantage of a Season so fit for our Obedience and Repentance; while the Forces of our Body and Mind are entire, while we are not discomposed by Pain or Faintness, we should strive to dispatch this needful Work, for which Infirmary may disable us.

Are we sick? it is then time to consider our Frailty, and the best we can to obviate the worst Consequences thereof: It is then very fit, when we do feel the sad Effects of Sin, to endeavour the Prevention of worse Mischiefs that may follow; it is seasonable, when we lie under God's correcting Hand, to submit

*Quod facere solent qui serius exierunt —*  
*calcar adamus. Sen. Ep. 68. 76. 19.*  
*Apoc. 3. 2. Στήθεζον τὰ λοιπὰ, ἃ μέλλει ἀποθανεῖν.*

*— non omnia grandior aetas*  
*Qua fugiamus habet — Ovid.*  
*Ἡ μὲν γὰρ νεότης πελάγει περιείκει*  
*μακροβύτου, κυμάτων ἀγρίων, καὶ πνέ-*  
*μάτων γέμοντι πονηρῶν ἢ πολλὰ ὥσ-*  
*περ εἰς λιμένα ἀκύμαντον τὰς ψυχὰς γε-*  
*ραίων ὁμιλεῖ ψυχὰς, παρέχουσα τῇ*  
*ψυχῇ τὴν ἡλικίας ἐντροπὴν ἀσφαλὲς.*  
*Chryl. Tom. 6. Orat. 38.*

*\* Οὐτ' ἄνωγ' ἐδίδες ἔσθ' ὅτε πᾶσι*  
*πρὸς τὸ κατὰ φύσιν ὡγαίνον. Epic. ad*  
*Monac.*

*\* Quare ju-*  
*ventus, imo*

*& consummare*



mit unto him, to deprecate his Wrath, to seek Reconciliation with him by all kinds of Obedience suitable to that State; with serious Resolutions to amend hereafter, if it shall please God to restore us; it is most adviseable, when we are in the Borders of Death, to provide for that State which lieth just beyond it.

Are we rich and prosperous? 'tis expedient then presently to amend, lest our Wealth do soon corrupt us with Pride, with Luxury, with Sloth, with Stupidity; lest our Prosperity becometh an inevitable Snare, an irrecoverable Bane unto us.

Are we poor or afflicted? 'tis then also needful to repent quickly; that we may have a comfortable Support for our Soul, and a certain Succour in our Distress; that we may get a Treasure to supply our Want, a Joy to drown our Sorrow; a Buoy to keep our Hearts from sinking into Desperation and Disconsolateness. This Condition is a Medicine, which God administeth for our Soul's Health; if it do not work presently so as to do us good, it will prove both grievous and hurtful to us.

12. Lastly, we may consider, that abating all the rueful Consequences of abiding in Sin, abstracting from the desperate Hazards it exposeth us to in regard to the future Life, it is most reasonable to abandon it, betaking our selves to a virruous Course of Practice. For Virtue in it self is far more eligible than Vice, to keep God's Commandments hath much greater Convenience than to break them; the Life of a good Man in all considerable respects is highly to be preferred above the Life of a bad Man: for what is Virtue, but a way of living that advanceth our Nature into a Similitude with God's most excellent and happy Nature; that promoteth our true Benefit and Interest; that procureth and preserveth Health, Ease, Safety, Liberty, Peace, comfortable Subsistence, fair Repute, Tranquillity of Mind, all kinds of Convenience to us? to what Ends did our most benign and most wise Maker design and suit his Law, but to the furthering our good, and securing us from Mischief, as not only himself hath declared, but Reason sheweth, and Experience doth attest? What is Vice but a sort of practice which debaseth and disparageth us, which plungeth us into grievous Evils, which bringeth Distemper of Body and Soul, Distress of Fortune, Danger, Trouble, Reproach, Regret, and numberless Inconveniencies upon us; which for no other reason, than because it so hurteth and grieveth us, was by our loving Creator interdicted to us? Virtue is most noble and worthy, most lovely, most profitable, most pleasant, most creditable; Vice is most sordid and base, ugly, hurtful, bitter, disgraceful in its self, and in its consequences. If we compare them together, we shall find that Virtue doth always preserve our Health, but Vice commonly doth impair it; that Virtue improveth our Estate, Vice wasteth it; that Virtue adorneth our Reputation, Vice blemisheth it; that Virtue strengtheneth our parts, Vice weakeneth them; that Virtue maintaineth our Freedom, Vice enslaveth us; that Virtue keepeth our Mind in Order and Peace, Vice discomposeth and disquieteth it; Virtue breedeth Satisfaction and Joy, Vice spawneth Displeasure and Anguish of Conscience: To enter therefore into a virtuous course of Life, what is it but to embrace Happiness; to continue in vicious Practice, what is it but to stick in Misery?

By entring into good Life, we enter into the Favour and Friendship of God, engaging his infinite Power and Wisdom for our Protection, our Succour, our Direction and Guidance; enjoying the sweet Effluxes of his Mercy and Bounty; we therewith become Friends to the holy Angels, and blessed Saints; to all good Men, being united in a holy and happy Consortship of Judgment, of Charity, of Hope, of Devotion with them; we become Friends to all the World, which we oblige by good Wishes, and good Deeds, and by the Influence of good Example: we become Friends to our selves, whom we thereby enrich and adorn with the best Goods; whom we gratifie and please with the choicest Delights: but persisting in Sin, we continue to affront, wrong, and displease our Maker, to be disloyal towards our Sovereign Lord; to be ingrateful towards our chief Benefactor, to disoblige the best Friend we have, to provoke

*Est virtus nihil aliud quam in se perfecta,  
& ad summum perducta natura. Cic. de  
Leg. 1.*

Deut. 10. 13.  
Mic. 6. 8.  
Neh. 9. 13.  
Rom. 7. 12.  
Psal. 19. 9.  
119. 107.



provoke a most just and severe Judge, to cope with Omnipotency; to contradict Infallibility, to enrage the greatest Patience, to abuse immense Goodness: We thereby become Enemies to all the World, to God, whom we injure and dishonour; to the Friends of God, whom we desert and oppose; to the Creatures, which we abuse to our Pride, Lust and Vanity; to our Neighbours, whom we corrupt or seduce; to our selves; whom we bereave of the best Goods, and betray to the worst Evils.

Beginning to live soberly, we begin to live like Men, following the Conduct of Reason; beginning to live in Charity, we commence the Life of Angels, enjoying in our selves most sweet Content, and procuring great Benefit to others; but going on in sinful Voluptuousness, we proceed to live like Beasts, wholly guided by Sense, and swayed by Appetite; being pertinacious in Malice, we continue to be like Fiends, working torment in our selves, and Mischief to our Neighbours.

Embracing Virtue we become wise and sober Men, worthy and honourable, beneficial and useful to the World; but continuing in Vice, we continue to be foolish and vain, to be vile and despicable, to be worthless and useless.

By our Delay to amend, what do we gain? what, but a little flashy and transient Pleasure instead of a solid and durable Peace; but a little counterfeit Profit instead of real Wealth; but a little smock of deceitful Opinion instead of unquestionable sound Honour; Shadows of imaginary Goods instead of those which are most substantial and true, a good Mind, the Love of God, the assured Welfare of our Souls. But this Field of Discourse is too spacious; I shall only therefore for Conclusion say, that speedily applying our selves to Obedience, and breaking off our Sins by Repentance, is in effect nothing else but from a present Hell in Trouble, and the Danger of a final Hell in Torment, to be translated into a double Heaven; one of joyful Tranquillity here, another of blissful Rest hereafter; unto the which Almighty God in his Mercy bring us all, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom for ever be all Glory and Praise. *Amen.*

*The very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*

<sup>1</sup> Thes. 5. 23.



# S E R M O N XVIII.

## Of Industry in general.

E C C L E S. IX. 10.

*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.*

Rom. 21. 11.

Πασα σπουδή.  
2 Cor. 8. 7.

**I**N St. Paul's Epistle to the *Romans*, among divers excellent Rules of Life, prescribed by that great Master, this is one, *Τῇ σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνεῖς. Be not slothful in business*, or to Business; And in the 2d Epistle to the *Corinthians*, among other principal Virtues, or worthy Accomplishments, for *abounding* wherein the *Apostle* commendeth those Christians, he ranketh *all diligence*, or industry exercised in all Affairs and Duties incumbent on them: this is that Virtue, the Practice whereof in this moral Precept or Advice the *Royal Preacher* doth recommend unto us; being indeed an eminent Virtue, of very general Use, and powerful Influence upon the Management of all our Affairs, or in the Conduct of our whole Life.

Industry, I say, in general, touching all Matters incident, which *our hand findeth to do*, that is, which Dispensation of Providence doth offer, or which choice of Reason embraceth, for employing our active Powers of Soul and Body, the *Wise-man* doth recommend; and to pressing the Observance of his Advice (waving all curious Remarks either *Critical* or *Logical* upon the Words) I shall presently apply my Discourse, proposing divers Considerations apt to excite us thereto; only first, let me briefly describe it, for our better Apprehension of its true Notion and Nature.

By Industry we understand a serious and steady Application of Mind, joyned with a vigorous Exercise of our active Faculties in prosecution of any reasonable, honest, useful Design, in order to the Accomplishment, or Attainment of some considerable Good; as for instance, a *Merchant* is industrious who continueth intent and active in driving on his Trade for acquiring Wealth; a *Soldier* is industrious, who is watchful for occasion, and earnest in Action towards obtaining the Victory; and a *Scholar* is industrious, who doth assiduously bend his Mind to study for getting Knowledge.

Ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ οὖσιν ἐχέσθαι τὸ κινεῖσθαι  
διαπαντὸς, καὶ ἀνέχεται ἡρεμῶν. ἐμπρο-  
χίον τὸ ζῶον τὸ τοῦ ἐπαινεῖν ὁ Θεός, &c.  
Chryl. in Act. Or. 35.

Industry doth not consist merely in Action; for that is incessant in all Persons, our Mind being a restless thing never abiding in a total Cessation from Thought or from Design (being like a Ship in the Sea, if not steered to some good purpose by reason, yet tossed by the Waves of 'Fancy, or driven by the Winds of Temptation somewhither.) But the direction of our Mind to some good End, without roving or flinching, in a streight and steady course, drawing after it our active Powers in execution thereof, doth constitute Industry; the which therefore usually is attended with Labour and Pain; for our Mind (which naturally doth affect Variety and Liberty, being apt to loath familiar Objects, and to be weary of any Constraint) is not easily kept in a constant Attention to the same thing; And the Spirits employed in Thought are prone to flutter and fly away, so that it is hard to fix them: And the corporeal Instruments of Action being strained to a high pitch, or detained in a Tone will soon feel a Lassitude, somewhat offensive to Nature; whence Labour or Pain is commonly reckoned an Ingredient of Industry; and Laboriousness is a Name signifying it; upon which Account this Virtue (as involving Labour) deserveth a peculiar Commendation; it being then most laudable to follow the Dictates of Reason, when so doing is attended with Difficulty and Trouble.

Such



Such in general I conceive to be the nature of Industry; to the practice whereof the following Considerations may induce.

1. We may consider that Industry doth besit the Constitution and Frame of our Nature; all the Faculties of our Soul, and Organs of our Body being adapted in a Congruity and Tendency thereto: Our Hands are suited for Work, our Feet for Travel, our Senses to watch for occasion of pursuing Good, and eschewing Evil, our Reason to plod and contrive Ways of imploying the other Parts and Powers; all these, I say, are formed for Action; and that not in a loose and gadding way; or in a slack and remiss degree, but in regard to determinate Ends, with Vigour requisite to attain them; and especially our Appetites do prompt to Industry, as inclining to things not attainable without it; according to that Aphorism of the *Wise-man*, *Ἐπιθυμία ἀκηρὸν ἀποκτείνεισιν* — *The Desire of the slothful killeth him, for his hands refuse to labour*; that *Prov. 21. 25*; is, he is apt to desire things which he cannot attain without Pains; and not enduring them he for want thereof doth feel a deadly Smart and Anguish: Wherefore in not being industrious we defeat the intent of our Maker; we pervert his Work and Gifts; we forfeit the Use and Benefit of our Faculties; we are bad Husbands of Natures Stock.

2. In consequence hereto Industry doth preserve and perfect our Nature; keeping it in good tune and temper; improving and advancing it toward its best state. The Labour of our Mind in attentive Meditation and Study doth render it capable and patient of thinking upon any Object or Occasion; doth polish and refine it by use, doth enlarge it by Accession of Habits; doth quicken and rowse our Spirits, dilating and diffusing them into their proper Channels: The very labour of our Body doth keep the Organs of Action sound and clean, discussing Fogs and superfluous Humours, opening Passages, distributing Nourishment, exciting vital Heat: Barring the use of it, no good Constitution of Soul or Body can subsist; but a foul Rust, a dull Numbness, a resty Listlessness, a heavy Unweildiness must seize on us; our Spirits will be stifled and choaked, our Hearts will grow faint and languid, our Parts will flag and decay; the Vigour of our Mind, and the Health of our Body will be much impaired.

It is with us as with other things in nature, which by Motion are preserved in their native Purity and Perfection, in their Sweetness, in their Lustre, Rest corrupting, debasing and defiling them; If the Water runneth it holdeth clear, sweet and fresh; but Stagnation turneth it into a noisome Puddle: If the Air be fanned by Winds, it is pure and wholesome, but from being shut up it groweth thick and putrid; If Metals be employed, they abide smooth and splendid; but lay them up, and they soon contract Rust; If the Earth be belaboured with Culture, it yieldeth Corn; but lying neglected, it will be overgrown with Brakes and Thistles; and the better its Soil is the ranker Weeds it will produce; all nature is upheld in its Being, Order and State by constant Agitation; every Creature is incessantly employed in Action conformable to its designed End and Use; In like manner the Preservation and Improvement of our Faculties depends on their constant Exercise.

3. As we naturally were composed, so by Divine Appointment we were originally designed for Industry; God did not intend that Man should live idly, even in his best State; or should enjoy Happiness without taking pains; but did provide Work enough even in Paradise it self; for *The Lord God* (saith the *Text*) *took man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it, and to keep it*, so that had we continu'd happy, we must have been ever busie, by our Industry sustaining our Life, and securing our Pleasure; otherwise Weeds might have overgrown Paradise, and that of *Solomon* might have been applicable to *Adam*, *I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding, and loe it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof*. *Gen. 2. 15.* *Prov. 24. 30.*

4. By our Transgression and Fall the necessity of Industry (together with a Difficulty of obtaining Good, and avoiding Evil) was encreased to us; being

Πάντα γὰρ ἡ ἀργία ἐλάττει, καὶ τὰ μέλη σώματι αὐτὰ, ὅς. Chryl. in Act. 35.  
Πρώτον μὲν γὰρ τοῖς τοῦ σώματος ἐκ-  
λυτον, ὅς. Ibid.

Ποῦτος ἵππος χρησίμος, ὁ τρυφῶν,  
ἢ ὁ ἐργαζόμενος; ποίαναν, ἢ πλεῖστα  
ἢ ἡ ἀργία, ποῖον ὕδωρ, τὸ τρέχον, ἢ  
τὸ ἐστῶς; ποῖος σίδηρος, ὁ κείμενος,  
ἢ ὁ ἐργαζόμενος, ὅς. Chryl. ibid.

Neglectis urenda filix immiscitur agris.  
Hor. Ser. 1. 3.  
Plut. περὶ πωιδ. p. 3.



ordained both as a just Punishment for our Offences, and as an Expedient Remedy of our Needs: For thereupon *the Ground was cursed to bring forth thorns and thistles to us*; and it was our Doom pronounced by God's own Mouth, *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground*; so that now Labour is fatally natural to us; now Man (as Job saith) *is born to labour as the sparks fly upward* (or, as the Vultur's chickens soar aloft, according to the Greek Interpreters.)

Job. 5. 7.

Αλλ' ἀνθρώπου  
πῶς γινώσκται  
κόπος γεννητός

ἢ γινώσκται ὡς ἀπὸ πυρρῶν ἀναστρέφονται. LXX. Interp. Now great Travel (as the Son of Sirach saith) is created for every Man; (ἀγῶνία μὲν γὰρ ἐκίςται παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ, Eccl. 4c. 1.) and an heavy Yoke is upon the Sons of Adam, &c.

5. Accordingly our Condition and Circumstances in the World are so ordered, as to require Industry; so that without it we cannot support our Life in any Comfort or Convenience; whence St. Paul's Charge upon the *Thessalonians*, that *If any one would not work, neither should he eat*, is in a manner a general Law imposed on Mankind by the Exigency of our State, according to that of Solomon; *The idle soul shall suffer hunger*, and, *The sluggard who will not plow by reason of the cold, shall beg in harvest, and have nothing*.

1 Thes. 3. 10.

Prov. 19. 15.

Prov. 20. 4.

Of all our many Necessities, none can be supplied without Pains, wherein all Men are obliged to bear a share; Every Man is to work for his Food, for his Apparel, for all his Accommodations, either immediately and directly, or by Commutation and Equivalence; for the *Gentleman* himself cannot (at least worthily and inculpably) obtain them otherwise, than by redeeming them from the Plowman and the Artificer, by Compensation of other Cares and Pains conducible to publick Good.

The wise Poet did observe well when he said,

Vlr. Geor. 1.

—Pater ipse colendi

Haud facilem esse viam voluit.

and St. Chrysostome doth propose the same Observation, that God to whet our Mind, and keep us from moping, would not that we should easily come by the Fruits of the Earth, without employing much Art and many Pains; in order thereto there must be Skill used in observing Seasons, and preparing the Ground; there must be Labour spent in manuring, in delving and plowing, in sowing, in weeding, in fencing it; there must

—curis acuens mortalia corda;

Nec torpore gravi passus sua regna veterno.

(Virg. *Ibid.*)

Διὰ τοῦτο εἰς ἀνδ' ἔχων κατέσπον ἐργασίας ὁ Θεός, &c. Chrysost. in Act. Rom. 35.

be Pains taken in reaping, in gathering, in laying up, in threshing, and dressing the Fruit e'er we can enjoy it: So much Industry is needful to get Bread; and if we list to fare more daintily, we must either hunt for it, using Craft and Toil to catch it out of the Woods, the Water, the Air; or we must carefully wait on those Creatures, of which we would serve our selves, feeding them that they may feed us; such Industry is required to preserve Mankind from starving. And to guard it from other Inconveniences, Mischiefs and Dangers surrounding us, it is no less requisite: for to shelter us from Impressions of Weather, we must spin, we must weave, we must build; and in order thereto we must scrape into the Bowels of the Earth to find our Tools, we must sweat at the Anvil to forge them for our Use; we must frame Arms to defend our Safety, and our Store from the Assaults of wild Beasts, or of more dangerous Neighbours, wild Men. To furnish Accommodations for our Curiosity and Pleasure, or to provide for the Convenience and Ornament of our Life, still greater measures of Industry are demanded; to satisfy those Intents, a thousand Contrivances of Art, a thousand ways of Trade and Business do serve, without which they are not attainable. In whatever Condition any Man is, in what State soever he be placed, whatsoever Calling or way of Life he doth embrace, some peculiar Business is thence imposed on him, which he cannot with any Advantage or good Success, with any Grace, with any Comfort to himself, or Satisfaction to others, manage without competent Industry; nothing will go on of it self without our Care to direct it, and our Pains to hold it, and forward it in the right Course: All which things shew that Divine Wisdom did intend that we should live in the Exercise of Industry, or not well without it; having so many Needs to be supplied, so many Desires to be appeased thereby; being exposed to so many Troubles and Difficulties, from which we cannot extricate our selves without it. But farther yet,

6. Let us consider that Industry hath annexed thereto, by Divine Appointment and Promise, the fairest Fruits, and the richest Rewards: All good things (being



(being either such in themselves, or made such by Humane Esteem) are the Fruits of Industry; ordered to sprout from it, under the Protection and Influence of God's Blessing, which commonly doth attend it.

All good things indeed are the Gift of God, and freely dispensed by his Hand; but he doth not give them absolutely without Condition, nor miraculously without Concurrence of ordinary means: By supporting our active Powers, and supplying needful Aid to our Endeavours; by directing and upholding us in the course of our Action; by preventing or removing Obstacles that might cross us; by granting that final Success which dependeth on his Pleasure, he doth confer them on us; Our Hand commonly is God's Hand by which he worketh good, and reacheth out Benefits to us; governing and wielding it as he pleaseth.

God indeed could not well proceed otherwise in dispensing his Favours to us; not well, I say; that is, not without subverting the Method of things which himself hath established; not without flighting and voiding his own first Bounty, or rendring the common Gifts of Nature (our Reason, our Senses, our active Powers) vain and useles; not without making us incapable of any Praise, or any Reward, which suppose Works atchieved by our earnest Endeavour; not without depriving us of that sweetest Content, which springeth from enjoying the fruit of our Labour.

Hence it is, that whatever in holy Scripture is called the Gift of God, is otherwhile affirmed to be the effect of Industry; it being the useful Condition upon which, and the Instrument whereby divine Providence conveyeth good things to us: What God said to *Joshua*, doth imply the general Method of his Proceeding, *Only, be thou strong and courageous—that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.*

Hence whatever we are directed to pray for, we are also exhorted to work for; declaring thereby, that we are serious in our Devotion, and do not mock God, asking that of him, which we deem not worth our Pains to acquire. It was well said of *Cato* in *Salust*, *Vigilando, agendo, consulendo, prosperè omnia cedunt, ubi socordia te atque ignavia tradideris nequicquam Deos implores, irati infestique sunt.* We are bid to pray even for our daily Bread, yet we may starve if we do not work for it; and in *St. Paul's* Judgment deserve to do so.

Hence we are bound to thank God for all those things, for the want of which we must thank our selves, and condemn our own Sloth.

Hence, although we should cast our Care on God, and relie on his Providence, being solicitous for nothing; yet we must not so trust him, as to tempt him, by neglecting the means which he doth offer, of relieving our selves; to be presumptuously slothful being no less blameable, than to be distrustfully careful.

Hence God in all such Cases, when we do need any good thing, is said to be our Helper and Succourer to the obtaining it; which doth imply that we must co-operate with him; and joyn our Forces to those, which He doth afford; so that as we can do nothing without him, so he will do nothing without us: yea, so that sometime we are said also to help God; *Curse ye Meroz, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord; to the help of the Lord against the mighty.* If ever God doth perform all without Human Labour conspiring, it is only in behalf of those who are ready to do their best, but unable to do any thing, being overpowered by the insuperable difficulty of things; But He never doth act Miracles, or controul Nature, he never doth stretch forth his Arm, or interpose special Power in favour of wilful and affected Sluggards.

In fine, it is very plain both in common Experience, declaring the course of Providence, and in Holy Scripture, expressing God's Intention, that Almighty God doth hold forth all good things as the Prizes and Recompences of our vigilant Care, and painful Endeavour; as by surveying Particulars we may clearly discern.

Nothing is more grateful to Men, than *prosperous Success* in their Undertakings, whereby they attain their Ends, satistie their Desires, save their Pains,

Καὶ τὸν Θεὸν ἐμελλεν λαμβάνειν ὁ μισθὸν, εἰ τὸ πᾶν ἐμελλεν εὐδοῦν τῷ Θεῷ.  
Chrys. in Eph. Orat. 2.

Περί οὐκ εἶναι μᾶλλον ἢ ψυχὴν δίδου-  
ται ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ καὶ διὰ τὸτο καὶ πόνους ἀ-  
νιμῶν ἀρετῇ οἰκονομεῖται αὐτῇ ταύτῃ  
ἐκ τῆς φύσεως. Chrys. in Joh. Or. 28.  
Διὰ τὸτο καὶ τὸ πᾶν ἐαυτοῦ ἐποίησεν,  
ἀλλ' ἐποίησεν καὶ ἡμῶν εἶναι ἵνα οὐ πρὸς  
σωτὸν λάβῃ πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν δικαίως ἡμᾶς  
εὐχαρίστη. Chrys. Tim. Or. 28.  
Joh. 1. 7.

Αὐτὸς τι νῦν  
δρῶν εἴτα τὸς  
Θεὸς καλεῖ.  
It Cato apud Sal.  
in bello Casil.  
Τὰν χάριν παριστέοντα δὲ τὰ τῷ  
χρὴν ἐπικαλεῖν. Plut. Apoph. Lac.

Pf. 37. 3. 23.  
Prov. 3. 6.

Oti laboribus  
omnia vendunt  
Judg. 6. 36.

7. 7.  
2 Kings 5. 2.  
Joh. 1. 17. 9.

Autos ti nun  
drōn eita tes  
Theos kalei.  
It Cato apud Sal.  
in bello Casil.

Judg. 5. 13.

Psal. 72. 12.

22. 11.  
2 Cor. 12. 10.

Chron. 14.

11.  
1 Sam. 14. 6.



Τὴν ἐπιμελείαν πάντα δὲ αὐτὰ γίγνεται. Antiph.  
Quodcumque imperavit sibi amicus, obtinuit, &c. Sen. de Ir. 2. 12.

and come off with Credit; this commonly is the Effect of Industry (which commandeth Fortune, to which all things submit and serve) and scarce ever is found without it; An industrious Person, who as such is not apt to attempt things impossible or unpracticable, can hardly fail of compassing his Designs, because he will apply all means requisite, and bend all his Forces thereto; striving to break through all Difficulties, and to subdue all Oppositions thwarting his Purposes; But nothing of worth or weight, can be achieved with half a Mind, with a faint Heart; with a lame Endeavour; Any Enterprize undertaken without Resolution, managed without Care, prosecuted without Vigour, will easily be dashed and prove abortive, ending in Disappointment, Damage, Disgrace, and Dissatisfaction: So the *Wise-man* doth assure us: *The soul* (saith he) *of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing, but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat*; the one pineth away with ineffectual and fruitless Desires; the other thriveth upon Satisfaction in prosperous Success.

Prov. 13. 4. *Plentiful Accommodations* for our Sustenance and Convenience all Men will agree to be very desirable; and these are indeed the Blessings of him, who *visiteth the earth and enricheth it*; who *crowneth the year with his goodness*, and; whose clouds drop fatness; but they are so dispensed by Heaven, that Industry must concur therewith in deriving them to us, and Sloth will debar us of them; for He (saith the Holy Oracle) *that tilleth his land, shall be satisfied with bread*; and the thoughts of the diligent alone tend to plenteousness; but *The sluggard shall beg in harvest, and have nothing*; and *The idle soul shall suffer hunger*.

Prov. 15. 30. *Wealth* is that, which generally Men of all things are wont to affect and covet with most ardent Desire, as the great Store-house of their Needs and Conveniences, the sure Bulwark of their State and Dignity; the universal Instrument of compassing their Designs and Pleasures; And most evident it is, that in the natural course of things, Industry is the way to acquire it, to secure it, to improve and enlarge it; the which Course pursued innocently and modestly, God will be so far from obstructing, that he will further and bless it; for that indeed it would be a Flaw in Providence, if honest Industry, using the means it affordeth, should fail of procuring a Competency; which joyned with a pious Contentedness in St. Paul's Computation, is *great wealth*. Wherefore although Solomon telleth us, that *the blessing of the Lord is that which maketh rich*; yet doth he not forget or contradict himself, when he also doth affirm, that *The hand of the diligent maketh rich*; and that *He who gathereth by labour shall increase*; because God blesteth the Industrious, and by his own Hand, as the most proper Instrument, maketh him rich; when the Preacher said, *There is a man to whom God hath given riches and wealth*, he knew well enough what Man it was, to whom God giveth them; and that Sluggards were not fit Objects of that Liberality: For he had observed it to be their Doom, to be poor and beggarly, their Nature to waste and embezel an Estate; He could assure us, that *Drowsiness shall cloath a man with rags*; He could propound it as a certain Observation, that *He who is slothful in his work, is brother to a great waster*; or that want of Industry in our Business will no less impair our Estate, than Prodigality it self; He could more than once warn the Slothful, that if he did *sleep on*, or persist in his sluggish way, Indigency would surprize and seize on him with an insupportable Violence: So (saith he) *shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man*.

Another Darling of Humane Affection (and a Jewel indeed of considerable worth and use in our Life) is *Honour*, or Reputation among Men: This also plainly, after the common Reason and Course of things, is purchased and preserved by Industry: For he that aspireth to worthy things, and assayeth laudable Designs, pursuing them steadily with serious Application of Heart, and resolute Activity will rarely fail of good Success, and consequently will not miss Honour, which ever doth crown Victory; And if he should hap to fail in his Design, yet he will not lose his Credit; for having meant well, and done his best, all will be ready to excuse, many to commend him: The very Qualities which Industry doth exercise, and the Effects which it doth produce, to beget Honour; as being ornaments of our Person and State. God himself (from whom *honour cometh*, and whose special Prerogative it is to bestow it, he, as King

1 Tim. 6. 6.

Prov. 15. 16.

Prov. 10. 22.

22. 4.

2 Chron. 29.

12.

Ecclef. 5. 19.

Prov. 10. 4.

13. 11.

Ecclef. 6. 1, 2.

S. Paul exhort-

eth to work

with our hands

1va μνηστεύς

χρεὶν ἔχοντι.

1 Thes. 4. 12.

Prov. 23. 21.

Prov. 18. 9.

Prov. 10. 4.

Prov. 6. 11.

24. 32.

1 Chron. 29.

11.

Dan. 5. 18.

Ecclef. 5. 19.



King of the World, being the Fountain of Honour) will be concerned to dignifie an industrious Management of his Gifts with that natural and proper Recompence thereof; conducting him who fairly treadeth in the Path of Honour, that he shall safely arrive unto it. It is therefore a Matter of easie Observation which the wise Prince doth prompt us to mark; *Seeft thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men*; that is, Diligence, as it is the fairest, so it is the surest way to the best Preferment; as it qualifyeth a Man for Employment, and rendereth him useful to the World, so it will procure worthy Employment for him, and attract the World to him; as the same great Author again doth assert. *The hand, saith he, of the diligent shall bear rule*; Yea, so honourable a thing is Industry it self; that an Exercise thereof in the meanest Rank is productive of Esteem, as the *Wise man* again doth observe and tell us; *He that waiteth on his master* (that is, with Diligence attendeth on the Business committed to him) *shall be honoured*.

No industrious Man is contemptible; for he is ever looked upon as being in a way of thriving, of working himself out from any straits, of advancing himself into a better Condition. But without Industry we cannot expect any thing but Disrespect, Shame and Reproach, which are the certain Portion of the Slothful; he not having the Heart to enterprize or the Resolution and Patience to achieve any thing deserving Regard, or apt to procure it; he wanting all the Ornaments and good Fruits that grow from Industry; he being only fit for a sordid and servil Condition; whence *the slothful* (saith Solomon) *shall be under tribute*; and, *He that sleepeth in harvest, is a son that causeth shame*; He causeth it to his Relations by his begarly Accoutrements, he causeth it much more to himself by his despicable Faultiness, and by the disgraceful Consequences of it.

Another yet more precious Good, far surpassing all external Advantages of our State; the which in the Judgment of him who (together with it having a full possession of all secular Prosperity, Wealth, Dignity and Power) was best able to prize it, *is better than Rubies, and incomparably doth excel all things that may be desired*, as ennobling, enriching and embellishing our better part: *Wisdom*, I mean, or a good Comprehension, and right Judgment about Matters of highest importance to us, is the Prize of Industry, and not to be gained without it; Nature conferreth little thereto, Fortune contributeth much less; it cannot be bought at any rate; *It cannot* (saith Job) *be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof; it cannot be valued with the Gold of Ophir, with the precious Onyx or the Sapphire*; it is the Off-spring of watchful Observation and Experience, of serious Meditation and Study; of careful Reflexion on things, marking, comparing and weighing their Nature, thier Worth, their Tendencies and Consequences; these are needful to the getting of Wisdom, because Truth, which it seeketh, commonly doth not lie in the Surface, obvious to a superficial Glance, nor only dependeth on a simple Consideration of few things; but is lodged deep in the Bowels of things, and under a knotty Complication of various Matters; so that we must dig to come at it, and labour in unfolding it: Nor is it an easie Task to void the Prejudices springing from Inclination or Temper, from Education or Custom, from Passion and Interest, which cloud the Mind, and obstruct the Attainment of Wisdom.

If we will have it, we must get it as Solomon himself did, that great Master of it. How was that? *I gave, saith he, my heart to know wisdom*. He who made it his Option and Choice before all things; who so earnestly and so happily did pray for it; upon whom it is so expressly said, that God in a special manner, and plentiful measure did bestow it; who averreth God to be the sole Donour of it (for, *The Lord, saith he, giveth wisdom, out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding*) yet even he, did first give his Heart to it, before it was given into his Heart: He did not only gape for it to receive it by mere Infusion, but he worked and studied hard for it. He was indeed a great Student, an inquisitive Searcher into Nature, a curious Observer of the World, a profound Considerer and Comparer of things; and by that industrious Course, promoted by Divine Blessing, he did arrive to that great Stock of so renowned a Wisdom.

And the same Method it is which he prescribeth to us for getting it; exhorting us, that we *incline our ear unto wisdom, and apply our heart to understanding*;



- ing; that we cry after knowledge, and lift up our voice for understanding; that we seek her as silver, and search for her, as for hid treasures; in following which Course he doth assure us of good Success; for then (saith he) shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God, which is the head or chief part of Wisdom; And Blessed (saith he again, in the Person and Place of Wisdom it self) is the man that beareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors; for he that findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord; It is the way, he supposeth, of finding Wisdom, to watch assiduously, to wait diligently upon the means of attaining her; and how infallible the Acquist of her is thereby, she doth again by his Mouth thus acquaint us; I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me; and She (saith his Imitator) is easily seen of them that love her, and found of such as seek her; whose seeketh her early, shall have no great travel, for he shall find her sitting at his doors.

This indeed is the only way; Idleness is not capable of so rich and noble a Purchase; a slothful Person may be conceited (yea needs must be so) but he can never be wise; A sluggard (saith Solomon) is wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason; this Conceit of Wisdom is a natural Issue of his Ignorance; and 'tis indeed no small part of his Folly, that he doth not perceive it; being no less stupid in reflection on his own mind, than in considering other matters; Being always in a slumber, he will often fall into such pleasant Dreams; and no wonder that he should presume upon abundance of Knowledge, who not lifting to take any Pains in the Search or Discussion of things, doth snatch the first Appearances, doth embrace every Suggestion of his Fancy, every Conceit gratifying his Humour, for Truth.

What should I speak of Learning, or the Knowledge of various things, transcending vulgar Apprehension? who knoweth not that we cannot otherwise reach any part of that than by assiduous Study and Contemplation? who doth not find that all the power in the World is not able to command, nor all the Wealth of the Indies to purchase one Notion? who can be ignorant, that no Wit alone, or Strength of Parts can suffice, without great Industry to frame any Science, to learn any one Tongue, to know the History of Nature, or of Providence: It is certainly by Horace's Method,

*Qui cupit optatam cursu contingere metam,  
Multa tulit, fecitque puer, sudavit &  
alset.*

*Hor. de Art.*

*Multa tulit, fecitque puer,*—

by much Exercise and Endurance of Pains, that any one can arrive to the Mark of being learned or skilful in any sort of knowledge.

Τὴν μὲν κακίαν  
ἡδονή, τὴν δὲ  
ἀρετὴν συγχε-  
κλήρωται πό-  
τις. Chrys. in  
Joh. Or. 36.  
Κακία μὲν γὰρ  
αὐτοδιδασκα-  
λὸν ἀρετὴν δὲ  
σὺν πόνῳ  
κλῆται. Sen.  
de Provid. 2.

But farther yet, *Virtue*, the noblest Endowment, and richest Possession whereof Man is capable; the Glory of our Nature, the Beauty of our Soul, the goodliest Ornament, and the firmest Support of our Life; that also is the Fruit and Blessing of Industry; that of all things most indispensibly doth need and require it. It doth not grow in us by Nature, nor befall us by Fortune; for Nature is so far from producing it, that it yieldeth mighty Obstacles and Resistances to its Birth, there being in the best Dispositions much Averseness from good, and great Proneness to Evil; Fortune doth not further its Acquits, but casteth in Rubs and Hindrances thereto, every Condition presenting its Allurements, or its Affrightments from it; all things within us, and about us conspire to render its Production, and its Practice laborious.

It is ('tis true) a Gift of Heaven, and cannot be obtained without a special Influence of Divine Grace, but it is given as Children are (of whom it is said, *Lo children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward*) not without fore Travel and Labour of the Mother, not without grievous Difficulty and Pangs in the Birth: In our Conversation to embrace *Virtue* God doth guide; but to what? to sit still? No, to walk, to run in his Ways: Grace doth move us, but whereto? to do nothing? No, but to stir, and act vigorously; *The holy Spirit doth help our infirmities*; but how could it help them, if we did not conjoyn our best (through weak) Endeavours with its Operations? to what doth it *συναντιλαμβάνεσθαι*, or co-help us, but to strive against sin, to work righteousness, to perform Duty with earnest Intention of Mind, and laborious Activity? God (saith St. Chrysostome)

Ἐμμείσαντο πρὸς ἡμᾶς ὁ ἀρετῶν ὁ  
Θεὸς, καὶ ὅτε ἐφ' ἡμῶν ἀφῆκε τὸ πᾶν ἄναι,  
ἵνα μὴ εἰς ἀπρόνοιαν ἐπαυρώμεθα, ὅτε αὐ-  
τοὶ τὸ πᾶν ἔλαβον. ἵνα μὴ εἰς ἡδονὴν  
ἀποκλινώμεθα ἀλλ' ὅτι. Chrys. Tom. 7. Or. 18.

*bath parted virtue with us, and neither bath left all to be in us, lest we should be elated to pride, nor himself bath taken all, lest we should decline to sloth.*

\* Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἡ φύσις τὰ κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρώπου ἰσχυρίσκει δὴ καὶ ἀνδρὶν βονδελὰς τὴν ἀρετὴν. ἰδὲ ἡ ἀνδρὶν χρεὶς ἐστὶ καὶ μὴ ἀποδιδόντα ἐργάζεσθαι αὐτὸν, ἀλλ' ἐκείνους συγκαταθεῖς προσκίλει, ἀποδίδωτε ἀνθρώπινον, καὶ τὴν διὰ πίστεως ἀνδρὶν κατὰ καὶ συμμαχίαν εἰς τελείωσιν ἀρετῆς. Bal. Conf. Mon. cap. 15.

Indeed



Indeed the very Nature and Essence of Virtue doth consist in the most difficult and painful Efforts of Soul; in the extirpating rooted Prejudices and Notions from our Understanding; in bending a stiff Will, and rectifying crooked Inclinations; in over-ruling a rebellious Temper; in curbing eager and importunate Appetites; in taming wild Passions; in withstanding violent Temptations; in surmounting many Difficulties, and sustaining many Troubles; in struggling with various unruly Lusts within, and encountering many stout Enemies abroad, which assault our reason, and *war against our soul*: In such Exercises its very Being lieth; its Birth, its Growth, its Subsistence dependeth on them; so that from any Discontinuance or Remission of them it would soon decay, languish away, and perish.

What Attention, what Circumspection, and Vigilancy of Mind, what Intention of Spirit, what force of Resolution, what Command and Care over our selves doth it require, to keep our Hearts from vain Thoughts, and evil Desires; to guard our Tongue from wanton, unjust, uncharitable Discourse; to order our Steps uprightly and steadily in all the Paths of Duty? *ἡ τὴ ἐκ ἐπιπορευομένη ἀρετὴ*; and what (as St. Chrysostome asketh) of all things belonging to *virtue is not laborious*? It is no small Task to know it, wherein it consisteth, and what is demanded of us; it is a far more painful thing to conform our Practice unto its Rules and Dictates.

If travelling in a rough Way; if climbing up a steep Hill; if combating stern Foes, and fighting sharp Battles; if crossing the Grain of our Nature and Desires; if continually holding a strict Rein over all our Parts and Powers, be things of Labour and Trouble, then greatly such is the Practice of Virtue.

Indeed each virtue hath its peculiar Difficulty, needing much Labour to master it: *Faith* is called *ἔργον πίστεως*, the *work of faith*; and it is no such easie Work, as may be imagined, to bring our Hearts into a thorough Perswasion about Truths crossing our sensual Conceits and controuling our peevish Humours; unto a perfect Submission of our Understanding, and Relinquishment of our Will to whatever God teacheth or prescribeth; to a firm Resolution of adhering to that Profession, which exacteth of us so much Pains, and exposeth us to so many Troubles.

*Charity* is also a laborious Exercise of many good Works, and he that will practise it, must in divers ways labour hardily; He must labour in voiding from his Soul many Dispositions deeply radicated therein by Nature, Opinion and Custom, (Envy, Frowardness, Stubbornness, perverse and vain Selfishness, from whence Wrath, Revenge, Spite and Malice do spring forth.) He must labour in effectual Performance of all good Offices, and in catching all Occasions of doing good; He must exert that *κόπον ἀγάπης*, that *labour of love*, whereof St. Paul doth speak; He must (as that holy *Apostle* directeth, not only in Precept, but by his own Practice) work with his own Hands, that he may supply the Wants of his Neighbour.

*Hope* it self (which one would think, when grounded well, should be a no less easie than pleasant Duty) doth need much Labour to preserve it safe, streight and stable, among the many Waves and Billows of Temptation assailing to shake and subvert it; whence a *patience of hope* is recommended to us; and we so often are exhorted to hold it fast, to keep it sure, firm and unshaken to the end.

*Temperance* also surely demandeth no small Pains; it being no slight Business to check our greedy Appetites, to shun the Enticements of Pleasure, to escape the Snares of Company and Example, to support the Ill-Will and Reproaches of those Zealots and Bigots for Vice, who cannot tolerate any Non-conformity to their Extravagancies; but (as St. Peter doth express it) *think it strange, if others do not run with them to the same excess of riot, speaking ill of them for it*.

What should I speak of *Meekness*, of *Patience*, of *Humility*, of *Contentedness*? Is it not manifest how laborious those Virtues are, and what Pains are necessary in the obtaining, in the Exercise of them? what Pains, I say, they require

Τὴν ἀρετὴν ἰδρύτα θεὸς περὶ ἀρετῆς  
ἐκκαλῶ  
Ἀδελφοί, μακροῦς καὶ ἡμέρας οἰμῶ  
ἐπ' αὐτῷ,  
καὶ τρυφῶτε

Heb. 12. 1.

1 Thes. 1. 3.

1 Thes. 1. 11.

John 6. 29.

Gal. 6. 16.

1 Thes. 1. 3.

Heb. 6. 10.

Eph. 4. 28.

Act. 20. 35.

Ακλινῶς

Heb. 10. 23.

Heb. 6. 19.

1 Thes. 1. 3.

Heb. 10. 36.

Heb. 6. 11. Ἐνδεκνὸς ἀνδρῶν  
Heb. 3. 6, 14. 2 Pet. 1. 10.

Πάντες ἐξ ἑνὸς σώματος ἐμυσσώμεθα  
καλὸν μὲν ἢ σωφροσύνην, τε καὶ δικαιοσύνην,  
χαλεπὸν μὲν τοι καὶ ἐπιπορευομένην. Plat. de  
Rep. 2.

1 Pet. 4. 4.



require in the Voidance of fond Conceits, in the Suppression of froward Humours, in the quelling fierce Passions, in the brooking grievous Crosses and Adversities, in the bearing heinous Injuries and Affronts?

Thus doth all Virtue require much Industry, and it therefore necessarily must it self be a great Virtue, which is the Mother, the Nurse, the Guardian of all Virtues; yea, which indeed is an Ingredient and constitutive Part of every Virtue; for if Virtue were easily obtainable or practicable without a good measure of Pains, how could it be Virtue? what Excellency could it have, what Praise could it claim, what Reward could it expect? God hath indeed made the best things not easily obtainable, hath set them high out of our Reach, to exercise our Industry in getting them, that we might raise up our selves to them, that being obtained, they may the more deserve our Esteem, and his Reward.

Lastly, the Sovereign Good, the last Scope of our Actions, the Top and Sum of our Desires; *Happiness* it self, or *Eternal Life* in perfect Rest, Joy and Glory; although it be the supreme Gift of God, and special Boon of divine Grace (*τὸ δὲ χάρισμα τὸ Θεοῦ*, But, saith St. Paul, the gift of God's grace is eternal life) yet it also by God himself is declared to be the Result and Reward of Industry; for we are commanded to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, and to give diligence in making our calling and election sure, by virtuous Practice; and God (saith St. Paul) will render to every man according to his works, to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life; and, in the Close of God's Book, it is proclaimed, as a Truth of greatest Moment, and special Point of God's Will, *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.* It is plainly Industry, which climbeth the holy Mount; it is Industry which taketh the Kingdom of Heaven by force; it is Industry, which so runneth as to obtain the Prize, which so fighteth as to receive the Crown, which so watcheth as to secure our everlasting Interest to us.

Thus do the choicest good things, of which we are capable, spring from Industry, or depend upon it; and no considerable Good can be attained without it; thus all the Gifts of God are by it conveyed to us, or are rendred in effect beneficial to us; for the Gifts of Nature are but Capacities which it improveth; the Gifts of Fortune or Providence are but Instruments, which it employeth to our Use; the Gifts of Grace are the Supports and Succours of it; and the very Gift of Glory is its Fruit and Recompence.

There are farther several other material Considerations, and weighty Motives to the Practice of this Duty, which Meditation hath suggested to me; but these, in regard to your Patience, must suffice at present; the other (together with an Application proper to our Condition and Calling) being reserved to another Occasion.



# SERMON XIX.

## Of INDUSTRY in general.

ECCLES. IX. 10.

*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might:*

**I**ndustry, which the Divine Preacher in this Text recommendeth to us, is a Virtue of a very diffusive Nature and Influence; stretching it self through all our Affairs, and twisting it self with every Concern we have; so that no Business can be well managed, no Design accomplished, no Good obtained without it: It therefore behoveth us to conceive a high Opinion of it, and to enure our Souls to the Practice of it, upon all Occasions: In furtherance of which Purposes I formerly not long since, did propound several Motives and Inducements; and now proceeding on, shall represent divers other Considerations serviceable to the same End.

1. We may consider that Industry is productive of Ease it self, and preventive of Trouble: It was no less solidly, than acutely and smartly advised by the Philosopher Crates: *Whether (said he) labour be to be chosen, labour; or whether it be to be eschewed, labour, that thou mayst not labour; for by not labouring, labour is not escaped, but is rather pursued;* and St. Chrysostome doth upon the same Consideration urge Industry, because Sloth (saith he) *is wont to spoil us, and to yield us much pain;* No Man can cozen Nature, escaping the Labour to which he was born; but rather attempting it, will delude himself, then finding most, when he shunneth all Labour.

Sloth indeed doth affect Ease and Quiet, but by affecting them doth lose them; It hateth Labour and Trouble, but by hating them, doth incur them; It is a self-destroying Vice, not suffering those who cherish it, to be idle, but creating much Work, and multiplying Pains unto them; engaging them into divers Necessities and Streights, which they cannot support with Ease, and out of which without extreme Trouble they cannot extricate themselves: Of this the Preacher doth afford us a plain Instance; *By much slothfulness (saith he) the building decayeth, and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through;* A little Care taken at first about repairing the House, would have saved its Decay and Ruin; and consequently the vast Charge and Trouble, becoming needful to re-edifie it: And the like doth happen in most other Cases and Occurrences of Life: Idleness commonly doth let slip Opportunities and Advantages, which cannot with Ease be retrieved; it letteth things fall into a bad Case, out of which they can hardly be recovered.

The certain Consequences of it (Disgrace, Penury, want of Experience; disabling and losing Friends; with all the like Mischiefs) cannot be supported without much Disquiet; and they disable a Man from redressing the Inconveniences into which he is plunged:

But Industry by a little voluntary Labour taken in due Place and Season, doth save much necessary Labour afterward, and by moderate Care doth prevent intolerable Distress; and the Fruits of it (Wealth, Reputation, Skill and Dexterity in Affairs, Friendships, all Advantages of Fortune) do enable a Man to pass his Life with great Ease, Comfort and Delight.

2. Industry doth beget Ease by procuring good Habits, and Facility of acting things expedient for us to do. By taking Pains to day we shall need less Pains to morrow; and by continuing the Exercise, within a while we shall need no Pains



Pains at all, but perform the most difficult Tasks of Duty, or of Benefit to us with perfect Ease, yea commonly with great Pleasure. What sluggish People account hard and irksome (as to rise early, to hold close to Study, or Business, to bear some Hardship) will be natural and sweet; as proceeding from another Nature, raised in us by Use.

Industry doth breed Assurance and Courage, needful for the Undertaking and Prosecution of all necessary Business, or for the Performance of all Duties incumbent on us.

No Man can quite decline Business, or disengage himself from Duty, without infinite Damage and Mischief accruing to himself; but these an industrious Man (confiding in this efficacious Quality) will set upon with Alacrity, and dispatch with Facility, his Diligence voiding Obstacles and smoothing the way to him; whereas Idleness finding some Difficulties, and fancying more, soon dishearteneth, and causeth a Man to desist from Action, rather chusing to crouch under the Burthen, than by Endeavour to carry it through, to discharge himself thereof: Whence as to an Industrious Man things seeming difficult will prove easie, so to

a slothful Person the easiest things will appear impossible; according to Solomon's Observation: *The way (saith he) of a slothful man is an hedge of thorns, but the way of the upright is made plain*; whereas a slothful Man, being apt to neglect his Obligations, is opposed to an upright Man, who hath a conscionable Regard to them, and is willing to take Pains in the Discharge of them: So it is declared, that to the one the way is rough and thorny, to the other beaten and expedite.

\* 479.  
Prov. 15. 19.  
\* Ὁδοὶ ἀνθρώπων ἐρημικαὶ, αἱ δὲ τῶν ἀνδρῶν τρυφίμων.

Prov. 22. 13. 26. 13.  
Προσφιλῆσαι δὲ λαίμαυροι, ἀνὴρ δὲ ἐν δόλοισι, ἐν δὲ πλάττεισιν φονεῖται.

\* Οὐδὲν ἄλλος ἐν πάθει, ὅ μὴ σφόδρα ἐπὶ τῇ ἐπαγγελίᾳ ὁ πόθος δεικνύσιν, οὐδὲ μὴ τὴν ἀσπίδα πικρῶς ἢ τὴν δυσχερίαν ὅ μὴ λίαν ἐν γόῳ, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν. Chrys. Tom. 6. Or. p. 144.  
Τὰ μὲν πάθει τὰς ἀμελείας φέρει, τὰ δὲ χαλεπὰ ἐπιμαρτυροῦσι ἀλλοτρίως. Plut. de Educ.

And again, *The slothful man (saith he) doth say, there is a Lion without, I shall be slain in the streets*; he is very apt to conceit, or to pretend imaginary Difficulties and Hazards, and thence to be deterred from going about his Business, or doing his Duty. This Consideration St. Chrysostome doth propose, exciting to an earnest Pursuit of Vertue; because *There is (saith he) nothing so easie which our great sloth doth not represent very grievous and burthensome; nothing so painful and difficult, which diligence and willingness do not shew to be very easie*.

3. We may consider that Industry will sweeten all our Enjoyments, and season them with a grateful Relish; for as no Man can well enjoy himself, or find sound Content in any thing, while Business or Duty lie unfinished on his Hand; so when he hath done his best toward the Dispatch of his Work, he will then comfortably take his Ease, and enjoy his Pleasure; then his Food doth taste favourily, then his Divertisements and Recreations have a lively Gustfulness, then his Sleep is very sound and pleasant, according to that of the Preacher, *The sleep of a labouring man is sweet*.

Eccles. 5. 12.  
Τὸ δόξα.

4. Especially those Accommodations prove most delightful, which our Industry hath procured to us; we looking on them with a special Tenderness of Affection, as on the Children of our Endeavour; we being sensible at what Costs of Care and Pain we did purchase them. If a Man getteth Wealth by Fraud or Violence, if he riseth to Preferment by Flattery, Detraction, or any bad Arts, he can never taste any good Savour, or find sound Comfort in them; And from what cometh merely by chance, as there is no Commendation due, so much Satisfaction will not arise: 'Tis the Wise-man's Observation, *The slothful man boasteth not that which he took in hunting*, and therefore it cannot be very grateful to him; but (addeth he) *the substance of a diligent man is precious*; that is, what a Man compasseth by honest Industry, that he is apt highly to prize; he triumphed in it, and (in St. Paul's Sense innocently) boasteth of it; he feeleth a solid Pleasure, and a pure Complacency therein; the manner of getting it doth more please him than the thing it self; as true Hunters do love the Sport more than the Quarry, and generous Warriours more rejoice in the Victory than in the Spoil;

Ποτὲ εὐαὶα μὲν καὶ ψυχὴ διακινῶται, ὡς ἐν ταῖς ἀντιμαχίαις, διὰ τὸ τοῦ πόθου ἀνιμῶντος αὐτὴν διὰ τὴν ταχέως ἐκείνην. Chrys. in Joh. Orat. 36.

For our soul (as St. Chrysostome discourseth) is more affected with those things, for which it hath laboured; for which Reason (addeth he) God hath mix'd Labour with Vertue in self; that he might endear it to us. Yea farther,

III. 10. 5. The



5. The very Exercife of Induftry immediately in it felf is delightful, and hath an innate Satisfaction which tempereth all Annoyances, and even ingratiateth the Pains going with it.

The very Settlement of our Mind on fit Objects, or its Acquiescence in determinate Action, conducing to a good End, whereby we are freed of Doubt, Distraction, and fastidious Littlefness, doth minister Content.

The Reflexion upon our having embraced a wise Choice, our Proceeding in a fair Way, our being in chace of a good Purpose, doth breed Complacency.

To consider that we are spending our time accomptably, and improving our Talents to good Advantage (to the Service of God, the Benefit of our Neighbour, the bettering of our own State) is very chearing and comfortable.

And whereas *In all Labour* (as the *Wife-man* telleth us) *there is profit*, the Foresight Prov. 14. 23, of that Profit affordeth Pleasure, the foretasting the good Fruits of our Industry is very delicious.

Hope indeed doth ever wait on Industry: And what is more delightful than Hope? This is the Incentive, the Support, the Condiment of all honest Labour; in Virtue whereof the Husbandman toileth, the Merchant trudgeth, the Scholar ploddeth, the Soldier dareth with Alacrity and Courage, not resenting any Pains, not regarding any Hazards which attend their Undertakings: This the holy *Apostles* tell us did enable them with Joy to sustain all their painful Work, and hazardous Warfare; enjoining us also as to *work with fear*, so to *re-joice in hope*.

In fine, Industry doth free us from great Displeasure, by redeeming us from the Molestations of Idleness, which is the most tedious and irksome thing in the World, racking our Soul with anxious Suspense, and perplexing Distraction; starving it for want of satisfactory Entertainment, or causing it to feed on its own Heart by doleful Considerations; infesting it with Crowds of frivolous melancholick, troublesome stinging Thoughts; galling it with a Sense of our squandering away precious time, of our slipping fair Opportunities, of our not using the Abilities and Advantages granted us, to any Profit or Fruit:

Whence St. Chrysostome saith very truly, that *there is nothing more unpleasant, more painful, more miserable than a Man that hath nothing to do: Is not this (saith he) worse than ten thousand Chains, to hang in suspense, and be continually gaping, looking on those who are present?* Indeed the strictest Imprisonment is far more tolerable, than being under Restraint by a lazy fitable Employment: This enchaineth a Man hand and foot, with Fetters: This is beyond any Imprisonment; It is the very Enticement in Effect sequestering him from the World, or debarring him from all reasonable Concerns therein. And if Liberty be *ἡσυχία αὐτοπραγίας, a quietness likest best*; then is he, who by his Sloth is disabled from any Labour, wherein he can find any reasonable Satisfaction, the veriest Slave, which Slavery Industry freeing us, and disposing us to perform any Labour ever is convenient, thereby doeth us a great Pleasure. Farther

6. Let us consider, that Industry doth afford a lasting Comfort, deposited in the Memory and Conscience of him that practiseth it. It will ever, upon his reviewing the Passages of his Life, be sweet to him to behold in them Testimonies and Monuments of his Diligence; it will please him to consider, that he hath lived to purpose, having done somewhat considerable! that he hath made an advantageous Use of his time; that he hath well husbanded the Talents committed to him; that he hath accomplish'd (in some measure) the Intents of God's Bounty, and made some Return for his excellent Gifts. What Comfort indeed can any Man have, yea, how fore Remorse must he feel in reflecting upon a Life spent in unfruitful and unprofitable Idleness? How can he otherwise than bewail his Folly and Baseness in having lived (or rather having only been) in vain; as the Shadow and Appearance of a Man; in having lavished his Days, in having buried his Talents, in having imbezzled his Faculties of Nature, and his Advantages from Providence; in having defeated the good Will of God, and endeavour'd no Requital to the munificent Goodness of his Maker, of his Preserver, his benign

Matth 25.26

1 Cor. 9. 10.  
— ipsa operis difficultate latus spem sege-  
ris de labore metitur, Apud Aug. Ep. 142.  
Rom. 12. 12. 5. 2. Heb. 3. 6.  
1 Tim. 4. 10. Col. 1. 5.  
2 Cor. 3. 12. 1 John 3. 3.  
Pet. 1. 3. Tit. 2. 13.

*Otiosus qui nescit uti plus habet negotii, &c.*  
*Otioso in otio animus nescit quid quidem velit, &c.* Ennius apud Agel. 19. id.

Kai ti andistegeyn ginont' an eis drape-  
 zain exontes poiein; ti mochtheisegeyn;  
 ti talamapoeisegeyn; melon e'chein tō  
 deismō, xasomai ē xechlōnai dia-  
 pavlos epi tō agōgē kaθ' hēmōn, o'ra-  
 tes paroiōias; Chryl. in A. Or. 35.

Otium est vivi  
hominis sepul-  
tura.

*Diu fuit, mo-  
diu vixit.*

1 Matth 25.26



Lord and Master, his gracious Saviour and Redeemer? How, without Confusion, can he in his Mind revolve, that he hath no-wise benefited the World, and profited his Neighbour, or obliged his Friends, or rendred to his Country (to the Society, or Community of which he is a Member) Amends for all the Safety and Quiet, the Support, the Convenience, and the Pleasure he hath enjoyed under its Protection, and in its Bosom? that he hath not born a competent Share in the common Burthens, or paid a due Contribution of his Care and Labour to the publick Welfare? How can such a Man look inward upon himself with a favourable Eye, or pardon himself for so loathsome Defaults?

7. Let us consider, that Industry doth argue a generous and ingenuous Completion of Soul.

It implieth a Mind not content with mean and vulgar things (such as Nature dealeth to all, or Fortune scattereth about) but aspiring to things of high Worth, and pursuing them in a brave Way, with adventurous Courage, by its own Forces, through Difficulties and Obstacles.

It signifieth in a Man a Heart, not enduring to owe the Sustenance or Convenience of his Life to the Labour or the Liberality of others; to pilfer a Livelihood from the World; to reap the Benefit of other Mens Care and Toil, without requiring a full Compensation, or out-doing his private Obligations by considerable Service and Beneficence to the Publick.

A noble Heart will disdain to subsist like a Drone upon the Hony gathered by others Labour; like a Vermin to filch its Food out of the publick Granary; or like a Shark to prey on the lesser Fry; but will one way or other earn his Subsistence: For he that doth not earn, can hardly own his Bread, as St. Paul implieth, when he saith, *Them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own Bread.*

2 Theff. 3. 12.  
Τὸν ἑαυτοῦ  
ἐξίτητον.

1 Cor. 9. 15.

2 Theff. 3. 9.

1 Cor. 9. 11.

1 Theff. 2. 6.

Acts 20. 34.

35. 18. 3.

1 Theff. 2. 9.

2 Theff. 3. 8.

1 Cor. 4. 12.

2 Cor. 11. 9.

2 Cor. 11. 23.

Prov. 31. 13.

14. 27.

Of this generous Ingenuity we have a notable Instance in that great Apostle himself; which he doth often represent as a Pattern to us, professing much Complacence therein; He with all Right and Reason might have challenged a comfortable Subsistence from his Disciples, in recompence for the incomparable Benefits he did confer on them, and of the excessive Pains he did endure for their Good; this he knew well, but yet did rather chuse to support himself by his own Labour, than any wise to seem burthenome or troublesome to them: *These Hands* (said he) *have ministered to my necessities, and to them that are with me; I have shewed you all things, that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.* This was the Practice of him, who was in Labours most abundant; and such is the Genius of every Man, who upon Principles of Conscience, Reason and Honour, is industrious. Of him it may be said, as of Solomon's good House-wife, *She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands; she is like the merchant's ship, she bringeth her food from afar; she looketh well to her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.*

Sloth is a base Quality, the Argument of a Mind wretchedly degenerate and mean; which is content to grovel in a despicable State; which aimeth at no worthy thing, nor pursueth any thing in a laudable way; which disposeth a Man to live *gratis* (precariouly) and ingratelously on the publick Stock, as an insignificant Cypher among Men, as a Burthen of the Earth, as a Wen of any Society; sucking Aliment from it, but yielding no Benefit or Ornament thereto.

8. Industry is a Fence to Innocence and Vertue; a Bar to all kind of Sin and Vice, guarding the Avenues of our Heart, keeping off the Occasions and Temptations to vicious Practice. When a Man is engaged in honest Employment, and seriously intent thereon, his Mind is prepossessed and filled, so that there is no room or vacancy for ill Thoughts, or base Designs to creep in; his Senses do not

lie open to ensnaring Objects; he wants Leisure and Opportunity of granting Audience to the Sollicitations of sinful Pleasure; and is apt to answer them with a *non vacat*; the Devil can hardly find Advantage of tempting him, at least many Devils cannot get Access to him, according to that Observation in *Cassian*, *A working Monk is assaulted by one Devil, but an idle one is spoiled by numberless bad Spirits.* The Case of Men ordinarily is like that to that of *Agyllus*;

—ne nil ageretur, amavit,

rather

*Semper te diabolus inveniat occupatum.*  
Bern. form. hom. v. cap. 7.

*Operans monachus uno demone pulsatur, otiosus vero innumeris Spiritibus devastatur.* Cass. de Instit. 10. 23.

Ovid. de Remed.



rather than do nothing, he was ready to do ill; he not having Business to employ his Thoughts, wanton Desires did insinuate themselves into his Heart, and transported him to that disastrous Wickedness, which supplied Matter to so many Tragedies: And the like Instance the *Sacred History* suggested in King David, <sup>2 Sam. 11. 2.</sup> who walking ('tis said) on the roof of his house, his Mind then roving, and being untacked from honest Cares, that Temptation seized on him, whereby he was plunged into that woful Misdemeanour, which did create to him so much Sorrow, did make such a Spot in his Life, and leave such a Blur on his Memory, whence yet we may draw some Benefit, taking it as a profitable Document and Warning, how Idleness doth expose the best Men to Danger.

Idleness is indeed the Nursery of Sins, which as naturally grow up therein as Weeds in a neglected Field, or Insects in a standing Puddle; *Idleness teacheth much evil.* <sup>Ecclus. 33. 27.</sup> It is the general Trap, whereby every Tempter assayeth to catch our Soul: For the Mind being loose from Care, Satan is ready to step in with his Suggestions, the World presenteth its Allurements, fleshly Desires rise up; proud, forward, wanton Cogitations slip in; ill Company doth entice, ill Example is regarded, every Temptation doth object and impress it self with great Advantage and Force; Men in such a case being apt to close and comply with Temptations, even to divert their Minds, and entertain themselves, to cure their Listlessness, to pass their time, committing Sin for want of better Occupation. Hence in Places, where there is least Work, the worst Sins do most prevail; and Idleness therefore was by the Prophet reckoned one of the three great Sins of Sodom, Parents of the rest: Behold (saith Ezekiel) *this was the iniquity of thy Sister Sodom; pride, falseness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her:* <sup>Ezek. 16. 49.</sup> Hence it seldom doth happen in any way of Life, that a Sluggard and a Rake-hell do not go together, or that he who is idle, is not also dissolute.

9. Particularly Industry doth prevent the Sins of vain Curiosity, Pragmaticalness, troublesome Impertinency, and the like Pests of common Life, into which, Persons not diligently following their own Business, will assuredly fall. We hear (saith St. Paul to the Thessalonians) *that there are some who walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy-bodies;* <sup>2 Thess. 3. 11.</sup> 'tis no wonder, if they did not work at all, that they should walk disorderly; or that quite neglecting their own Concerns, they should *μεμεργάζεσθαι*, <sup>Μεμεργάζεσθαι, ἀναΐσχυρος, ἀναΐσχυρος: Working nothing, but overworking.</sup> overwork, or be too busy in matters not belonging to them, intruding themselves into the Affairs of their Neighbours: For there is a natural Connexion between these things, since every Man must be thinking, must be doing, must be saying somewhat, to spend his Leisure, to uphold Conversation, to please himself, and gratify others, to appear somebody among his Companions: to avoid the Shame of being quite out of Employment: Wherefore not having the Heart to mind his own Affairs, he will take the Boldness to meddle with the Concerns of other Men: If he cannot have the Substance, he will set up an Idol of Business, and seem very active in his Impertinency. In order thereto, being curiously inquisitive, and prying into the Discourse, Actions and Affairs of all Men. This Men are apt to do in their own Defence: And besides, Idleness doth put Men into a loose, garish, wanton Humour, disposing them without Heed or Regard to meddle with any thing, to prattle at any rate. In fine, whoever hath no Work at home, will be gadding to seek Entertainment abroad, like those Gossips of whom St. Paul saith, *They learn to be idle, wandring about from house to house;* <sup>1 Tim. 5. 3.</sup> and not only idle, but tatters also, and busy bodies, speaking things which they ought not: If indeed we consider, all the frivolous and petulant Discourse, the impertinent Chatting, the rash Censures, the spiteful Detractions which are so rife in the World, and so much poison all Conversation, we shall find the main Root of them to be a want of Industry in Men, or of diligent Attendance on their own Matters; which would so much take up their Spirit and Time, that they would have little Heart or Leisure to search into, or comment upon other Men's Actions and Concerns.

10. Let us consider that Industry is needful in every Condition and Station, in every Calling and Way of Life; in all Relations, for our good Behaviour, and right Discharge of our Duty in them. Without it we cannot in any state act decently, or usefully, either to the Benefit and Satisfaction of others, or to our own Advantage and Comfort.

Are



Are we rich ? Then is Industry requisite for keeping and securing our Wealth, for managing it wisely, for employing it to its proper Uses, and best Advantages ; (in the Service of God, in Beneficence to our Neighbour, in advancing publick Good) so that we may render a good Accompt to him who hath entrusted us with the Stewardship thereof : Industry is very needful to guard us from the Temptations and Mischiefs to which Wealth doth expose us, that it do not prove a treacherous Snare, an unwieldy Burthen, a destructive Poison and Plague to us, throwing us into Pride and Vanity, into Luxury, into Stupidity, into distracting Solicitude, into a base wordly and earthly Temper of Heart, into a prophane Oblivion of God, and of our own Souls.

*Vitreæ fama,*  
Hor.  
Eccl. 10. 1.

Are we in conspicuous Rank of Dignity, or in Honour and Repute among Men ? Then is Industry requisite to keep us fast in that State, to hold us from tumbling from that Pinnacle down into extream Disgrace ; for then all Eyes are upon us, strictly observing what we do, and ready to pass Censure on our Actions ; so that great Diligence is necessary to approve our selves, and shun Obloquy. Nothing is more brittle than Honour, every little thing hitting on it, is able to break it, and therefore without exceeding Care we cannot preserve it ; Nothing is more variable or fickle than the Opinions of Men (wherein Honour consisteth) it is therefore no easie matter to fix or detain them in the same Place.

Honour cannot live without Food or Fuel ; it must be nourished by worthy Actions ; without a continual Supply of them, it will decay, languish, and pine away : Industry therefore is required to keep it ; and no less is necessary to use it well, in a due Subordination to God's Honour, and Reference to his Service, that instead of an Ornament and Convenience, it do not prove a baneful Mischief to us ; puffing up our Minds with vain Conceits and Complacencies, inclining us to Arrogance and Contempt of others, tempting us by assuming to our selves to rob God of his due Glory ; to decline which Evils great Care is requisite ; we must have a steady Balast, and we must hold the Rudder warily, when we carry so great Sail.

On the other hand, are we poor and low in the World ; or do we lie under Disgrace ? Then do we much need Industry to shun Extremities of Want and Ignominy ; that we be not swallow'd up and overwhelm'd by Need or Contempt ; to support us under our Pressures, to keep up our Spirits from Dejection and Disconsolateness ; to preserve us from impious Discontentedness and Impatience : Industry is the only Remedy of that Condition, enabling us to get out of it, retrieving a Competence of Wealth or Credit ; or disposing us to bear it handsomely, and with Comfort ; so as not to become forlorn or abject Wretches.

It is so needful to every Condition ; and it is so for all Vocations ; for,

Is a Man a Governour, or a Superiour in any Capacity ? Then what is he but a publick Servant doom'd to continual Labour, hired for the Wages of Respect and Pomp, to wait on his People ; in providing for their Needs, protecting their Safety, preserving their Peace and Welfare ; where is he but on a Stage, whereon he cannot well act his Part, without vigilant Attendance to his Charge, and constant Activity in performing all the Functions thereof ? He is engag'd in great Obligations and Necessities of using extream Diligence, both in regard to himself and others. *Homer's Description of a Prince is a good one ; One who hath much People, and many Cares committed to him :*

*Ὁ λαὸς τ' ἐπιτετραφέναι, καὶ πόσα μέμνη.*

He must watchfully look to his own Steps, who is to guide others by his Authority and his Example. All his Actions require special Conduct, not only his own Credit and Interest, but the common Welfare depending thereon. He must heedfully advise what to do, he must diligently execute what he resolveth on. He hath the most ticklish things that can be (the Rights and Interests, the Opinions and Humours of Men) to manage. He hath his own Affections to curb and guide, that they be not perverted by any sinister Respects, not swayed by any unjust Partiality, not corrupted by Flattery or Fear. He will find, that to wield Power innocently, to brandish the Sword of Justice discreetly and worthily, for the Maintenance of Right, and Encouragement of Vertue, for the Suppression of Injury, and Correction of Vice, is a Matter of no small Skill or slight Care.

Industry is indeed a Quality most proper for Persons of high Rank and Dignity, or of great Power and Authority ; who have special Opportunities to employ



ploy it in weighty Affairs to great Advantage; whose Undertakings being of vast moment do need answerable Efforts to move and guide them: The Industry of a Mechanick, or a Rustick, acting in a low and narrow Sphere can effect no great Matter, and therefore it self need not to be great; but the Industry of a Prince, of a Nobleman, of a Gentleman, may have a large and potent Influence, so as to render a Nation, a County, a Town, happy, prosperous, glorious, flourishing in Peace, in Plenty, in Vertue; it therefore for atchieving such Purposes need be, and should be proportionably great; a small Power not being able to move a great Weight, nor a weak Cause to produce a mighty Effect. Wherefore Cicero recommending Pompey for a publick Charge, doth reckon these to be the *Imperatoria Virtutes*, Qualities besitting a Prince, or General, wherein he did excel, *Labour in business, Valour in Dangers, Industry in acting, Nimbleness in Performance, Counsel in providing*.—And Alexander the Great, reflecting on his Friends degenerating into Sloth and Luxury, told them that it was a most slavish thing to luxuriate, and a most royal thing to labour.

*Labor in negotio, fortitudo in periculis, industria in agendo, celeritas in conficiendo, consilium in providendo, &c.*  
Cic. pro lege Manil.

Δουλοῦνταί τινες τὸ πρῶτον, βασιλευσύν τὸν δὲ ποιεῖν, Plut. in Alex. p. 1262.

And for those who move in a lower Orb of Subjection or Service, I need not shew how needful Industry is for them: Who knoweth not that to be a good Subject, doth exact a careful Regard to the Commands of Superiours, and a painful Diligence in observing them? That to make a good Servant, Fidelity and Diligence must concur? whereof the first doth suppose the last, it being a part of Honesty in a Servant to be diligent; whence δὲλε πονηρὸν καὶ ὀκνηρὸν, *O thou Mat. 25. 25; wicked and slothful Servant*, were in the Gospel well coupled; and the first Epithet was grounded on the second, he being therefore wicked, because he had been slothful.

Neither can a Man be a true Friend, or a good Neighbour, or any-wise a good Relative, without Industry disposing him to undergo Pains in performing good Offices, whenever Need doth require, or Occasion invite.

In fine, it is palpable, that there is no Calling of any sort, from the Sceptre to the Spade, the Management whereof with any good Success, any Credit, any Satisfaction, doth not demand much Work of the Head, or of the Hand, or of both.

If Wit or Wisdom be the Head, if Honesty be the Heart, Industry is the Right Hand of every Vocation; without which the shrewdest Insight and the best Intention can execute nothing.

A Sluggard is qualified for no Office, no Calling, no Station among Men, he is a mere No-body; taking up room, peffering and clogging the World.

It also may deserve our Consideration, that it is Industry, whereto the publick State of the World, and of each Commonweal therein is indebted for its being, in all Conveniencies and Embellishments belonging to Life, avanc'd above rude and sordid Barbarism; yea whereto Mankind doth owe all that good Learning, that Morality, those Improvements of Soul, which elevate us beyond Brutes.

To industrious Study is to be ascribed the Invention and Perfection of all those Arts whereby human Life is civiliz'd, and the World cultivated with numberless Accommodations, Ornaments and Beauties.

All the comely, the stately, the pleasant, and useful Works, which we do view with Delight, or enjoy with Comfort, Industry did contrive them, Industry did frame them.

Industry reared those magnificent Fabricks, and those commodious Houses; it formed those goodly Pictures and Statues; it raised those convenient Causeys, those Bridges, those Aqueducts; it planted those fine Gardens with various Flowers and Fruits; it clothed those pleasant Fields with Corn and Grass; it built those Ships, whereby we plough the Seas, reaping the Commodities of foreign Regions. It hath subjected all Creatures to our Command and Service, enabling us to subdue the fiercest, to catch the wildest, to render the gentler sort most tractable and useful to us. It taught us from the Wool of the Sheep, from the Hair of the Goat, from the Labours of the Silk-worm, to weave us Cloaths to keep us warm, to make us fine and gay. It helpeth us from the inmost Bowels of the Earth to fetch divers needful Tools and Utensils.

It



It collected Mankind into Cities, and compacted them into orderly Societies, and devised wholesome Laws under shelter whereof we enjoy Safety and Peace, Wealth and Plenty, mutual Succour and Defence, sweet Conversation and beneficial Commerce.

*Ut variat usum meditanda extunderet  
artes  
Paulatim; &c.*

Vir. Georg. I.

It by Meditation did invent all those Sciences whereby our Minds are enriched and enabled, our Manners are refined and polished, our Curiosity is satisfied, our Life is benefited.

What is there, which we admire, or wherein we delight, that pleaseth our Mind, or gratifieth our Sense, for the which we are not beholden to Industry?

Doth any Country flourish in Wealth, in Grandeur, in Prosperity? It must be imputed to Industry, to the Industry of its Governours setting good Order, to the Industry of its People following profitable Occupations: So did *Cato*, in that notable Oration of his in *Sallust*, tell the Roman Senate, that it was not by the Force of their Arms, but by the Industry of their Ancestors that Commonwealth did arise to such a Pitch of Greatness. When Sloth creepeth in, then all things corrupt and decay; then the publick State doth sink into Disorder, Penury, and a disgraceful Condition.

*Cat. apud Sal.  
in bello Catil.*

12. Industry is commended to us by all sorts of Example, deserving our Regard and Imitation. All Nature is a Copy thereof, and the whole World a Glass, wherein we may behold this Duty represented to us.

We may easily observe every Creature about us incessantly working toward the End for which it was designed, indefatigably exercising the Powers with which it is endued; diligently observing the Laws of its Creation. Even Beings void of Reason, of Sense, of Life it self, do suggest unto us Resemblances of Industry; they being set in continual Action toward the effecting reasonable Purposes, conducing to the Preservation of their own Beings, or to the Furtherance of common Good.

The Heavens do rowl about with unwearied Motion, the Sun and Stars do perpetually dart their Influence; the Earth is ever labouring in the Birth and Nourishment of Plants: the Plants are drawing Sap, and sprouting out Fruits and Seeds (to feed us, and propagate themselves,) the Rivers are running, the Seas are tossing, the Winds are blustering, to keep the Elements sweet in which we live.

Prov. 6. 6.

*Solomon* sendeth us to the *Ant*, and biddeth us to consider her ways (which provideth her meat in the summer, and gathered her food in the harvest) many such Instru-cters we may find in Nature; the like industrious Providence we may observe in every living Creature; we may see this running about, that swimming, another flying in Purveyance of its Food and Support.

If we look up higher to rational and intelligent Natures, still more noble and apposite Patterns do object themselves to us.

Here below every Field, every Shop, every Street, the Hall, the Exchange, the Court it self (all full of Business, and fraught with the Fruits of Industry) do mind us how necessary Industry is to us.

2 Cor. 11. 27.

If we consult History, we shall there find, that the best Men have been most industrious; that all great Persons, renown'd for heroical Goodness (the worthy *Patriarchs*, the holy *Prophets*, the blessed *Apostles*) were for this most commendable, that neglecting their private Ease, they did undertake difficult Enterprises, they did undergo painful Labours for the Benefit of Mankind, they did pass their Days, like *St. Paul*, *ὁ κοπιῶν ἐν κόποις*, in labours and toilsome pains for those Purposes.

Acts 10.

Our great Example, the Life of our blessed Lord himself, what was it but one continual Exercise of Labour? His Mind did ever stand bent in careful Attention, studying to do good. His Body was ever moving in wearisome Travel to the same Divine Intent.

*Σὺ δὲ Σπύρι  
πνευματικῶν  
ἐκείνου πορεύου  
χρῆσις Ἀγγε-  
λῶν. Orph.*

If we yet soar farther in our Meditation to the superiour Regions, we shall there find the blessed Inhabitants of Heaven, the Courtiers and Ministers of God, very busie and active; They do vigilantly wait on God's Throne in Readiness to receive and to dispatch his Commands; they are ever on the Wing, and fly about like Lightning to do his pleasure. They are attentive to our Needs, and ever ready to protect, to assist, to relieve us! Especially, they are diligent Guardians, and Suc-



Succourers of good Men; officious spirits, sent forth to minister for the heirs of salvation; so even the Seat of perfect Rest is no Place of Idleness. Yea, God himself, although immoveably and infinitely happy, is yet immensely careful, and everlastingly busie: He rested once from that great Work of Creation; but yet *my father* (saith our Lord) *worketh still*; and he never will rest from his Works of Providence, and of Grace. His Eyes continue watchful over the World, and his Hands stretched out in upholding it. He hath a singular Regard to every Creature, supplying the Needs of each, and *satisfying the desires of all*.

And shall we alone be idle, while all things are busie? Shall we keep our Hands in our Bosom, or stretch our selves on our Beds of Laziness, while all the World about us is hard at work in pursuing the Designs of its Creation? Shall we be wanting to our selves, while so many things labour for our Benefit? Shall not such a Cloud of Examples stir us to some Industry, not to comply with so universal a Practice, to cross all the World, to disagree with every Creature, is it not very monstrous and extravagant?

I should close all this Discourse with that, at which, in pitching on this Subject I chiefly did aim, an Application exhortatory to our selves, urging the Practice of this Vertue by Considerations peculiar to us as Scholars, and derived from the Nature of our Calling; but the doing this, requiring a larger Discourse than the time now will allow of; I shall reserve it to another Occasion; adding only one Consideration more.

Lastly, if we consider, we shall find the Root and Source of all the Inconveniences, the Mischiefs, the Wants, of which we are so apt to complain, to be our Sloth; and that there is hardly any of them, which commonly we might not easily prevent or remove by Industry: Why is any Man a Beggar, why contemptible, why ignorant, why vicious, why miserable? Why, but for this one Reason, because he is slothful! because he will not labour to rid himself of those Evils? What could we want, if we would but take the Pains to seek it, either by our Industry, or by our Devotion? For where the first will not do, the second cannot fail to procure any good thing from him, who giveth to all men liberally, and hath promised to supply the Defect of our Ability by his free Bounty; so that if we join in these two Industries (industrious Action, and industrious Prayer) there is nothing in the World so good, or so great, of which, if we are capable, we may not assuredly become Masters: And even for Industry it self, especially in the Performance of all our Duties towards God, let us industriously pray: Even so, *The God of peace sanctifie us wholly; and make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight; through our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom for ever be all glory and praise.* AMEN.

## SERMON XX.

### Of INDUSTRY in our general Calling, as Christians.

ROM. XII. 11.

*Not slothful in Business.*

**I**NDUSTRY is a very eminent Vertue, being an Ingredient (or the Parent) of all other Vertues, of constant use upon all Occasions, and having Influence upon all our Affairs.

Vol. III.

Z

For

Τῇ σπουδῇ καὶ  
ἀμελείᾳ.  
Solicitudine  
non pigri.  
Vulg.



For it is in our Nature framed ; all our Powers of Soul and Body being fitted for it, tending to it, requiring it for their Preservation and Perfection.

We were designed for it in our first happy State ; and upon our Lapse thence were farther doomed to it, as the sole Remedy of our Needs and the Inconveniences to which we became exposed. For,

Without it we cannot well sustain or secure our Life in the Enjoyment of any Comfort or Convenience ; we must work to earn our Food, our Cloathing, our Shelter ; and to supply every Indigency of Accommodations, which our Nature doth crave.

To it God hath annexed the best and most desirable Rewards ; Success to our Undertakings, Wealth, Honour, Wisdom, Vertue, Salvation ; all which as they flow from God's Bounty, and depend on his Blessing ; so from them they are usually convey'd to us through our Industry, as the ordinary Channel and Instrument of attaining them.

It is requisite to us, even for procuring Ease, and preventing a Necessity of immoderate Labour.

It is in it self sweet and satisfactory ; as freeing our Mind from Distraction, and wrecking Irresolution ; as feeding us with good Hope, and yielding a Forerast of its good Fruits.

It furnisheth us with Courage to attempt, and Resolution to atchieve things needful, worthy of us, and profitable to us.

It is attended with a good Conscience, and chearful Reflections of having well spent our time, and employ'd our Talents to good Advantage.

It sweetneth our Enjoyments, and seasoneth our Attainments with a delightful Relish.

It is the Guard of Innocence, and barreth our Temptations to Vice, to Wantonness, to vain Curiosity and Pragmaticalness.

It argueth an ingenuous and generous Disposition of Soul ; aspiring to worthy things, and pursuing them in the fairest Way ; disdaining to enjoy the common Benefits, or the Fruits of other Men's Labour without deserving them from the World, and requiting it for them.

It is necessary for every Condition and Station, for every Calling, for every Relation ; no Man without it being able to deport himself well in any State, to manage any Business, to discharge any sort of Duty.

To it the World is indebted for all the Culture, which advanceth it above rude and sordid Barbarism ; for whatever in common Life is stately, or comely, or useful, Industry hath contrived it, Industry hath composed and framed it.

It is recommended to us by all sort of Patterns considerable ; for all Nature is continually busie and active in Tendency toward its proper Designs ; Heaven and Earth do work in incessant Motion ; every living Creature is employ'd in proggings for its Sustenance ; The blessed Spirits are always on the Wing in dispatching the Commands of God, and ministring Succour to us ; God himself is ever watchful, and ever busie in preserving the World, and providing for the Needs of every Creature.

The Lives of our *Blessed Saviour*, of all the *Patriarchs*, the *Prophets*, the *Apostles*, the *Saints* in this respect have been more exemplary ; no Vertue being more conspicuous in their Practice than Industry in performing the hard Duties, and painful Tasks imposed on them for the Service of God, and the Benefit of Mankind.

Such is the Vertue upon which I have formerly discoursed in general and at large, but shall now more specially consider, according to St. *Paul's* Prescription ; in reference to its most proper Matter, *Business*, explaining and pressing it accordingly.

Be not *slothful in business* (that is in discharge of it) or *to business* (that is to undertake it) this is the Rule ; the Nature and Needfulness whereof we shall declare.

By *business* (Business) we may understand any Object of our Care and Endeavours which doth require them, and may deserve them ; which by reason of its Difficulty cannot well be accomplished or attained without them ; and which is productive of some Fruit or Recompence answerable to them ; the which hath *opera causam*, a need of Labour, and *opera pretium*, some Effect worth our Pains ; if it be not such, it is not a due matter of vertuous and laudable Industry.

There



There are many things, about which Men with great Earnestness employ themselves, called Business, but not deserving that Name: There are divers spurious kinds of Industry, which may not pretend to Commendation, but rather do merit Blame; according to that of St. Chrysostom, *Labour which hath no Profit, cannot obtain any Praise.*

There is a *νεροσπασία*, a vain Industry, and a *κακοσπασία*, a naughty Industry, both agreeing with genuine vertuous Industry in the Act, as implying careful and painful Activity, but discording from it in Object and Design; and consequently in Worth, and moral Esteem.

*Aliud agere*, to be impertinently busie, doing that which conduceth to no good purpose, is in some respect worse than to do nothing, or to forbear all Action; For 'tis a positive Abuse of our Faculties, and trifling with God's Gifts; 'tis a throwing away Labour and Care, things valuable in themselves; 'tis often a running out of the way, which is worse than standing still; 'tis a debasing our Reason, and declining from our Manhood, nothing being more foolish or childish, than to be solicitous and serious about Trifles: For who are more busie and active than Children, who are fuller of Thoughts and Designs, or more eager in Prosecution of them than they? But all is about ridiculous Toys, the Shadows of Business, suggested to them by Apish Curiosity, and Imitation. Of such Industry we may understand that of the Preacher, *The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them*; for that a Man soon will be weary of that Labour, which yieldeth no Profit, or beneficial Return.

But there is another Industry worse than that, when Men are very busie in devising and compassing Mischiefs; an Industry whereof the Devil affordeth a great Instance; for the cursed Fiend is very diligent, ever watching for Occasions to supplant us, ever plotting *Methods* and Means to do harm, ever driving on his mischievous Designs with unwearied Activity; *going to and fro in the earth; running about as a roaring Lion*, looking for Prey, and seeking whom he may devour.

And his wicked Brood are commonly like him, being *workers of Iniquity*, *men of painful Men*, *οι πανουργοι*, Men that will do all things; who will spare no Pains, nor leave any Stone unturned, for satisfying their Lusts, and accomplishing their bad Designs.

So indeed it is, that as no great Good, so neither can any great Mischiefe be effected without much Pains: And if we consider either the Characters or the Practices of those, who have been famous Mischiefe-doers, the Pests of Mankind, and Disturbers of the World, we shall find them to have been no Sluggards.

These two Sorts of vain and bad Industry the Prophet *Isaiah* seemeth to describe in those Words; *They hatch cockatrice eggs, and weave the spiders web*; of which Expressions one may denote mischievous, the other frivolous Diligence in Contrivance or Execution of naughty or vain Designs; and to them both that of the Prophet *Hosea* may be referred; *They have sowed the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind*; Guilt, Remorse, and Punishment being the Consequences of both. And of them both common Experience doth afford very frequent and obvious Instances, a great Part of Human Life being taken up with them. For,

How assiduously intent and eager may we observe Men to be at Sports? How soon will they rise to go forth to them? With what Constancy and Patience will they toil in them all the Day? How indefatigable are they in riding or running about after a Dog or a Hawk, to catch a poor Beast or silly Bird?

How long will Men sit poring on their Games, dispensing with their Food and Sleep for it?

How long and serious Attention will Men yield to a wanton Play? How many Hours will they contentedly sit thereat? What Study will Men employ on Jest and impertinent Wit? How earnest will they be to satisfy their vain Curiosity?

How in such Cases do Men forget what they are doing, that Sport should be Sport, not Work; to divert and relax us, not to employ and busie us; to take off our Minds a little, not wholly to take them up; not to exhaust or tire our Spirits,



but to refresh and cheer them, that they may become more fit for grave and serious Occupations?

Jer. 2. 13. How painful will others be *in hewing them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that will hold no water*; that is, in immoderate Pursuit of worldly Designs? How studiously will they plod, how restlessly will they trudge, what Carking and Drudgery will they endure in driving on Projects of Ambition and Avarice? What will not they gladly do or suffer, to get a little Preferment, or a little Profit? It was a common Practice of old, and sure the World is not greatly mended since the Psalmist did thus reflect, *Surely every man walketh in a vain shew, surely they are disquieted in vain; he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them.*

Psal. 39. 6. How many vigilant, and stout Pursuers are there of Sensuality, and riotous Excess; such as those of whom the Prophet speaketh, *Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink, that continue until Night, till wine inflame them?*

Isa. 5. 11. How busie (O Shame, O Misery! How fiercely busie) are some in accomplishing Designs of Malice and Revenge? How intent are some to over-reach, to circumvent, to supplant their Neighbour? How sore Pains will some take to seduce, corrupt or debauch others? How active will some be in sowing Strifes, in raising Factions, in fomenting Disorders in the World? How many industrious Slaves hath the Devil, who will spare no Pains about any kind of Work, which he putteth them to? How many like those of whom the *Wise-man* saith, *Their feet run*

Ἐργασίαν τινα ὁ διάβολος ἐπέταξε,  
πῶς ἐπίπονα, πῶς ἐμφοχῶσα, &c.  
Chrys. ἀνδρ. 16.

Prov. 6. 8. *to evil, and are swift in running to mischief; they sleep not except they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.*

Isa. 55. 2. Now with all these Labourers we may well expostulate in the Words of the Prophet; *Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?*

Such Labours are unworthy of Men, much less do they beseem Christians.

It becometh us not as rational Creatures to employ the excellent Gifts of our Nature, and noble Faculties of our high-born Soul, the Forces of our Mind, the Advantages of our Fortune, our precious Time, our very Care and Labour vainly or unprofitably upon any thing base or mean; being that our Reason is capable of achieving great and worthy things, we much debase it by stooping to regard Toys, we do extremely abuse it by working Mischief.

Much more doth it misbecome us as Christians (that is, Persons devoted to so high a Calling, who have so worthy Employments assigned to us, so glorious Hopes, so rich Encouragements proposed to us for our Work) to spend our Thoughts and Endeavours on things impertinent to our great Design, or mainly thwarting it.

Eph. 1. 18. The proper Matter and Object of our Industry (those false ones being excluded) is true Business; or that which is incumbent on a Man to do, either in way of Duty, being required by God, or by Dictate of Reason, as conducing to some good Purpose; so that in Effect it will turn to accompt, and finally in Advantageous Return will pay him for his Labour of Mind or Body; that which the *Wise-man* did intend, when he advised, *Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; whatever thy Hand findeth, that is, whatever by Divine Appointment (by the Command or Providence of God) or which upon rational Deliberation, doth occur as Matter of our Action; comprizing every good Purpose and reasonable Undertaking incident to us.*

But our Business, according to the Holy *Apostle's* Intent, may be supposed especially to be the Work of our Calling; to which each Man hath a peculiar Obligation; and which therefore is most properly his Business, or *ἡ ἐργασία* emphatically, the Business allotted to him.

Now this Business, our Calling, is double; our general Calling, which is common to us all as Christians, and our particular Calling, which peculiarly belongeth to us, as placed in a certain Station, either in the Church or State. In both which Vocations that we are much obliged and concerned to be industrious, shall be now my Business to declare.

I. As



I. As to our general Calling (that *sublime*, that *heavenly*, that *holy* Vocation) in which by divine Grace, according to the Evangelical Dispensation, we are engaged, that necessarily requireth, and most highly deserveth from us a great measure of Industry; the Nature and Design of it requireth, the Fruit and Result of it deserveth our utmost Diligence; all Sloth is inconsistent with Discharging the Duties, with enjoying the Hopes, with obtaining the Benefits thereof. For,

It is a State of continual Work, and is expressed in Terms importing abundant, incessant, intense Care and Pain; for to be indeed Christians, *We must work out our salvation with fear and trembling*; We must by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour, and Immortality. We must walk worthy of the Lord to all well-pleasing, being fruitful in every good work. We must be rich in good works, and filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God: *We are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

We have a Soul to save, and are appointed, *ἐς περισποίησιν σωτηρίας*, to make an Acquist of salvation.

We have a Mind to improve with Vertue and Wisdom, qualifying us for Entrance into Heaven, for Enjoyment of God's Favour, for Conversation with Angels.

As Christians we are assumed to be Servants of God, and re-admitted into his Family, from which for our Disloyalty we had been discarded; so that as he was our natural Lord, so he is now such also by special Grace; who did make us, who doth maintain us, under whose Protection, and at whose Disposal we subsist; whence we are obliged to be faithfully diligent in his Service: we must constantly wait upon him in devotional Addresses; we must carefully study to know his Pleasure; we must endeavour exactly to perform his Will, and obey his Commands; we must strive to advance his Glory, to promote his Interest, to improve all Talents and Advantages committed to us for those Purposes; we must (as St. Paul expresseth it) *always abound in the work of the Lord.*

We must also look upon our selves as Servants of Christ our Redeemer; who by his Blood has purchased us to himself, that we might be *zealous of good works*; performing a Service to him, which consisteth in a faithful Discharge of manifold Duties; and in Pursuance of all Vertue; with most intent Application of Mind, with expedite Promptitude, with accurate Circumspection; *giving all diligence* (as St. Peter speaketh) in adding one Vertue to another; *being ready* (as St. Paul saith) *to every good work*; and seeing that we walk circumspectly, or behave our selves exactly according to the Rules of Duty in all our Conversation.

This Service requireth of us assiduous Attendance on Works of Piety and Devotion; that we do *incessantly watch to Prayers*, that we *always give thanks*, that we *continually do offer up the sacrifice of praise to God.*

It demandeth from us a continual labour of charity; that we *serve one another in love*; that we should, as we have opportunity, *work good to all men*, that we should *always pursue good toward one another, and toward all men.*

It obligeth us with all our powers to pursue peace with all men (which, considering our natural Peevishness, Pride, and Perverseness, is often no easie Task) and that we do *συνδύεσθαι*, studiously endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

It chargeth on us contentedly and patiently to undergo whatever God doth impose of Burthen or Sufferance, so that *patience hath its perfect work*; and it is a crabbed Work to bend our stiff Inclinations, to quell our refractory Passions, to make our sturdy Humour buckle thereto.

It doth exact that we should govern and regulate according to very strict and severe Laws all the Faculties of our Soul, all the Members of our Body, all internal Motion, and all external Actions proceeding from us; that we should check our Inclinations, curb our Appetites, and compose our Passions; that we should guard our Hearts from vain Thoughts and bad Desires; that we should bridle our Tongues from

Ἡ ἀνω κλήσις. Phil. 3. 14.  
Κλήσις ἐπαγγελίας. Heb. 3. 1.  
Ἀγάπη κλήσις. 1 Tim. 19.  
Eph. 1. 18. 2 Thess. 1. 11.

Phil. 2. 12.  
Rom. 2. 7.  
Col. 1. 10.  
1 Tim. 6. 18.  
Phil. 1. 11.  
John 15. 5.  
8, 16.  
Jam. 3. 17.  
Eph. 2. 10.  
1 Thess. 5. 9.

1 Thess. 1. 9.  
Rom. 7. 6.  
6. 22.  
Eph. 2. 19.  
Eph. 5. 10.  
Rom. 12. 2.  
Luke 11. 28.  
Mat. 25. 27.  
1 Cor. 15. 58.

Col. 3. 25.  
Eph. 6. 7.  
1 Cor. 7. 23.  
6. 20.  
Tit. 2. 14.

2 Pet. 1. 5. *Ἐπεδίω πᾶσαν ἀρετήν ὡς ἀγαπᾷτε.*  
Tit. 3. 1.  
Βλέπετε πῶς ἀκριβῶς—Eph. 5. 15.

Col. 4. 2. Eph. 6. 18. Rom. 12. 12.  
1 Thess. 5. 17. Luke 18. 1.  
1 Thess. 5. 18. Eph. 5. 20.  
Col. 3. 17.  
Heb. 13. 15.

1 Thess. 1. 3. *Κόπον ἀγάπης.*  
Gal. 5. 13. *ἀλλήλους.*  
Gal. 6. 10. *Ἐργάζεσθε.*  
1 Thess. 5. 15.

Rom. 12. 18.  
Εἰ δυνατόν.  
Heb. 12. 14.  
2 Tim. 2. 22.  
Eph. 4. 3.

Jam. 1. 4.



from evil and from idle Discourses; that we should order our Steps in the straight Way of Righteousness, not deflecting to the Right Hand or to the Left.

In the Discharge of this Service how many rough Difficulties are there to be surmounted, how many great Obstacles to be removed, how many stout Oppositions to be encountered, how many potent Enemies to be vanquished, how many fore Hardships, Crosses and Tribulations to be endured?

How shrewd a Task must we find it to circumscribe our Hearts, to mortify our Earthly Members, to crucify our Flesh with its Affections and Lusts, to pull out our right Eyes, and cut off our right Hands, to renounce our worldly Interests, to hate our nearest Relations, to take up and bear our Cross whenever Conscience and duty shall call us thereto?

Our Calling therefore doth require great Industry; and the Business of it consequently is well represented by those Performances, which demand the greatest Intention, and laborious Activity; it is stiled *Exercise* (agonistick and ascetick

γυμναζε σεαυτον. 1 Tim. 4. 7.  
Εν τετρω ασκω. Acts 24. 16.  
Heb. 12. 11.

*Exercise*; γυμναζε σεαυτον προς ευσεβειαν, *Exercise thy self to godliness*; and εν τετρω αυτος ασκω, *Herein I exercise my self to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men;*)

Eph. 6. 12. wrestling (ημων η παλη, *our wrestling is not* (only) *against flesh and blood, but against*  
1 Cor. 9. 25. *principalities and powers;*) *running a race* (Let us run with patience the race that is set  
Heb. 12. 1. *before us;* So ran that ye may obtain: I press toward the mark for the prize of the high  
1 Cor. 9. 24. *calling.*) *A warfare, a combating* (War a good warfare, holding faith and a good  
Phil. 3. 14. *Conscience; fight the good fight; thou therefore endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus*  
2 Tim. 4. 7. *Christ: Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things;*) *offering*  
1 Tim. 1. 18. *violence;* (The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the  
6. 12. *violent take it by force)* *watching* (Let us not sleep as do others,  
2 Tim. 4. 7. 2 Tim. 2. 3. *but let us watch and be sober: Watch ye, stand fast in the faith,*  
1 Cor. 9. 25. Matth. 11. 12. *quit you like men, be strong: watch and pray, that ye enter not*  
1 Theff. 5. 6. 1 Cor. 16. 13. *into temptation.*)

Mat. 26. 41. 24. 42. Luke 12. 37.  
1 Pet. 5. 8. Apoc. 3. 2. 16. 15.

Hence the Precepts importing the general Tenour of Christian Practice are usually couched in terms implying great Sedulity and Contention of the Soul;

Luke 12. *Αγωνισατε, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: Let us labour therefore to enter into that*  
Σπιδαζομεν. *rest; Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to ever-*  
Heb. 4. 11. *lasting life. Give diligence to make your calling and election sure; Gird up the loins of*  
Εργαζεσθε. *your mind, be sober, and hope to the end: Wherefore, brethren, seeing that ye look for*  
John 6. 27. *such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.*  
Σπιδαζατε. *Such is the Work of our general Calling, and so much Industry it challengeth*  
2 Pet. 1. 10. *from us; with great Reason indeed, for that such Work is needful to our Happi-*  
1 Pet. 1. 13. *ness, and that our Labour will certainly be rewarded therewith.*  
Luke 12. 35. *The Work indeed of it self is most worthy to employ us; doth most become us,*  
Eph. 6. 14. *doth much adorn us, doth best besit our Divine Extraction and large Capacity; is*  
2 Pet. 3. 14. *the noblest, the handsomest, the sweetest Employment that could take us up;*

John 4. 36. *but we have also the greatest Inducements and Encouragements possible for our Industry therein.*

There are by the Divine Bounty and Mercy, Wages assigned abundantly corresponding to our Work, yea, infinitely surpassing it: there is πολλοις μιθως a great (or a manifold) hire for our slender and simple Performances; there are several noble Prizes highly worth our striving for with our utmost Strength and Contention of Soul.

Mat. 5. 12. *In recompence thereof we shall assuredly gain even here in this transitory State the special Favour and Love of God, with his constant Protection and Care for our Good; his faithful Direction, and friendly Assistance to guide us, and uphold us in all our Ways, to bless and prosper our Undertakings, to supply us in our Needs, and comfort us in our Distresses; so that we shall lack nothing that is good, that no evil shall happen to us, that all things shall concur and co-operate for our benefit.*

Rom. 14. 18. *He that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of Men.*  
Pl. 34. 9. 84. 11. 33. 19. 37. 3. 19.  
Plal. 91. 10. — Prov. 12. 21.  
Rom. 8. 38.

Col. 3. 15. *We shall thereby taste the Satisfaction of a calm Mind, and a sound Conscience, quickned by the Consolations of the Divine Spirit; the peace of God ruling in our hearts, which passeth all understanding.*

Phil. 4. 7. *We shall afterward, when this Moment is passed over, and our short Day's Work dispatched, receive from God's bountiful Hand an unconceivable Affluence of*



of good things, an eternal Permanence of Life; undisturbed Rest, *indefectible* Jam. 1. 12.  
*Wealth, ineffable Joy, incorruptible Glory, a Kingdom unshakable.* 1 Pet. 5. 4.  
 He (saith our Lord) that reapeth, receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life 1 Cor. 9. 25.  
*everlasting.* John 4. 36.

To them (saith St. Paul) who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and  
 honour, and immortality, God in recompence will bestow eternal life. And, *And, I have* *noted* *And*  
 I have (saith that blessed Labourer of himself) fought the good fight, I have fi- Rom. 2. 6.  
 nished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of 2 Tim. 4. 8.  
 righteousness.

What more effectual Spur or Incentive can there be to Industry in this Business,  
 than to consider that which St. Paul so often doth inculcate; *Knowing that what-* 2 Cor. 5. 10.  
*soever good thing any man doeth, the same (a Recompence for the same) he shall receive* Col. 3. 24.  
*of the Lord; and knowing that (in consideration of our Service done to the Lord)*  
*of the Lord we shall receive the reward of the inheritance?*

What Exhortation can be more firmly grounded, or strongly backed, than is  
 that of the Apostle, *Therefore, my brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always a-* 1 Cor. 15. 58.  
*bounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know, that your labour is not in vain*  
*in the Lord.*

May it not also much encourage us to Industry to be assured, that not only the  
 kind of our Work, but the Degree of our Labour shall be considered and requited,  
 in just Proportion; so that the harder we work, the higher we shall be rewarded;  
 for, *to each one, (saith our Lord) the son of man shall render a reward* *Αποδοσει ἑ-*  
*ἑκάστῳ, according to his performance; Every one (saith St. Paul)* *κάστω.*  
*shall receive ἰδιον μισθον ὡς ἰδιον ἔργον, his proper reward ac-* 1 Cor. 3. 8. Rev. 22. 12. 2. 23.  
*ording to his proper work; whence we have reason to observe* Mat. 25. 21. Luke 19. 12.  
 St. John's Advice, *Look to your selves, that ye lose not those* *Μισθὸν τινος ἀπολέσῃτε.* 2 Joh. 8.  
*things which ye have gained, but that ye receive a full reward.*

To be negligent or slothful in such a Case, for want of a little Care and Pains  
 to forfeit such Advantages, what a Pity, what a Folly is it? Were an Opportu-  
 nity presented, by a little minding our Business, and bestirring our selves, to pro-  
 cure a fair Estate, or a good Preferment, would not he be deemed mad or sot-  
 tish, who would sit still, and forego that his Advantage? How much more Wild-  
 ness is it to be drowsie and sluggish in this Case, thereby losing eternal Bliss and  
 Glory? Well therefore might the Apostle say, *How shall we escape, if we neglect so* Heb. 2. 3.  
*great Salvation? How shall we escape not only the Sin, and Guilt of base Ingrat-*  
*itude toward him that graciously doth offer it, but the Imputation of most*  
*wretched Folly, in being so much wanting to our own Interest and Welfare?*

Is it not a sad thing, a woful Shame to observe, what Pains Men will throw  
 away upon Things of small or no Concernment to them? Yea, what Toil and  
 Drudgery will they sustain in the Service of *Satan*, in Pursuit of Sin, in the Gratifi-  
 cation of their Vanities and Lusts.

What Pains will a covetous Wretch take in scraping for Pelf, how will he rack  
 his Mind with carking Sollicitude to get, to keep, to spare it? How will he tire  
 his Spirits with restless Travel? How will he pinch his Carcase for want of what  
 Nature craveth? What Infamy and Obloquy will he endure for his niggardly  
 Parsimony and Sordidness?

How much Labour will an ambitious Fop undergo for Preferment, or vain Ho-  
 nour? To how many tedious Attendances, to how pitiful Servilities will he sub-  
 mit? What sore Crosses and Disappointments will he swallow? What Affronts  
 and Indignities will he patiently digest, without desisting from his Enterprize?

How will a Man (as St. Paul observed) *πάντα ὑπομείνων*, endure all painful  
 Abstinence and Continence, in order to the obtaining a *corruptible Crown*, a fading 1 Cor. 9. 25.  
 Garland of Bays, a Puff of vain Applause?

What Diligence will Men use to compass the Enjoyment of forbidden Pleasures;  
 how watchful in catching Opportunities, how eager in quest of them will they  
 be? What Difficulties will they undertake, what Hazards will they incur, what  
 Damages and Inconveniencies will they sustain, rather than fail of satisfying their  
 Desires?

What Atings of Head and Heart; what Pangs of Mind, and Gripes of Con-  
 science, what Anxieties of Regret and Fear will every Worker of Iniquity un-  
 dergo? So faithful Friends hath this vain and evil World; so diligent Servants  
 hath



hath the accursed Lord thereof; so careful and laborious will Men be to destroy and damn themselves: O that we could be willing to spend as much Care and Pains in the Service of our God! O that we were as true Friends of our selves! O that we could be as industrious for our Salvation; that is, in the Business of our General Calling; which having considered, let us proceed to the other Business belonging to us, which is,

II. The Business of our particular Calling; that in reference whereto St. Paul doth prescribe, *Every man as the Lord hath called him, so let him walk. Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called*; let him so abide, as faithfully to prosecute the Work, and discharge the Duty of it; the doing which otherwhere he termeth *negotium et industria*, to do our own Business (working with our hands) and enjoineeth it in Opposition to those two great Pests of Life, Sloth and pragmatrical Curiosity; or the Neglect of our own, and meddling with other Mens Affairs.

This the Apostle nameth our Calling, because we are called or appointed thereto by divine Providence; for he supposeth and taketh it for granted, that to each Man in this World God hath assigned a certain Station, unto which peculiar Action is fited; in which Station he biddeth him quietly to abide, till Providence fairly doth translate him, and during his Abode therein diligently to execute the Work thereof.

Every Man is a Member of a double Body; of the Civil Common-wealth, and of the Christian Church: In relation to the latter, whereof St. Paul telleth us (and what he saith by Parity of Reason may be referred likewise to the former) that *God hath set the members every one in the body, as it pleaseth him*; and as it is in the Natural, so it is in every Political and Spiritual Body, every Member hath its proper Use and Function; *All members (saith St. Paul) have not the same operation, the same Office, or the same Work and Operation*; yet every one hath some Work. There is no Member designed to be idle or useless, conferring no Benefit to the whole; but *the whole body (saith the Apostle) fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying it self in love*; each Member doth conspire and co-operate to the Strength, Nourishment, Thriving and Welfare of the whole.

Every Man (who continueth a Man; in his Senses, or in any good Degree of natural Integrity) is by God endowed with competent Abilities to discharge some Function useful to common Good; or at least needful to his own Sustenance; to every one some Talent is committed, which in Subordination to God's Service he may improve, to the Benefit of the World, God's temporal, or of the Church, God's Spiritual Kingdom.

It is plainly necessary, that the greatest Part of Men should have a determinate Work allotted to them, that they may support their Life and get their Food without being injurious, offensive, or burthensome to others; for their living they must either follow some Trade, or they must shark and filch, or they must beg, or they must starve.

And the rest are obliged to do somewhat, conducive to publick Good; that they may deserve to live; for a Drone should not be among the Bees; nor hath Right to devour the Honey: If any Man doth pretend, or presume that he hath nothing to do but to eat, to sleep, to play, to laugh; to enjoy his Ease, his Pleasure, his Humour, he thereby doth as it were disclaim a reasonable Title of living among Men, and sharing in the Fruits of their Industry; he in St. Paul's Judgment should be debarred of Food, for *this (saith the Holy Apostle) we commanded you, that if any man would not work, neither should he eat*.

Such an one in the Body of Men, what is he but an unnatural Excrecence, sucking Nutriment from it, without yielding Ornament or Use? What is he but a Wen deforming and encumbering the Body, or a Canker infesting and corrupting it.

As no Man (at least with Decency, Convenience and Comfort) can live in the World, without being oblig'd to divers other Men for their Help in providing Accommodations for him; so Justice and Ingenuity (corroborated by divine Sanctions) do require of him, that in Commutation he, one way or other, should undertake some Pains redounding to the Benefit of others.

So



So hath the great Author of Order distributed the Ranks and Offices of Men in order to mutual Benefit and Comfort, that one Man should plow, another thresh, another grind, another labour at the Forge, another knit or weave; another sail, another trade, another supervise all these labouring to keep them all in Order and Peace; that one should work with his Hands and Feet, another with his Head and Tongue; all conspiring to one common End, the Welfare of the whole, and the supply of what is useful to each particular Member; every Man so reciprocally obliging and being obliged; the Prince being oblig'd to the Husbandman for his Bread, to the Weaver for his Cloaths, to the Mason for his Palace, to the Smith for his Sword; those being all obliged to him for his vigilant Care in protecting them; for their Security in pursuing the Work, and enjoying the Fruit of their Industry.

So every Man hath a Calling, and proper Business; whereto that Industry is required, I need not much to prove, the thing it self in Reason and Experience being so clearly evident; for what Business can be well dispatched, what Success can be expected to any Undertaking, in what Calling can any Man thrive without Industry? What Business is there that will go on of it self, or proceed to any good Issue if we do not carefully look to it, steadily hold it in its Course, constantly push and drive it forward? It is true, as in Nature, so in all Affairs, *Nihil movet non motum*, nothing moveth without being moved.

Our own Interest should move us to be industrious in our Calling, that we may obtain the good Effects of being so in a comfortable and creditable Subsistence; that we may not suffer the Damages and Wants, the Disappointments and Disgraces ensuing on Sloth; but the chief Motive should be from Piety and Conscience; for that it is a Duty which we owe to God. For God having placed us in our Station; he having apportioned to us our Task, we being in Transaction of our Business his Servants, we do owe to him that necessary Property of good Servants, without which Fidelity cannot subsist; for how can he be looked on as a faithful Servant, who doth not effectually perform the Work charged on him, or diligently execute the Orders of his Master?

St. Paul doth enjoin Servants, that they should in all things obey their Masters, with conscientious Regard to God, as therein performing Service to God, and expecting Recompence from him: And of Princes he saith, that they, in Dispensation of Justice, enacting Laws, imposing Taxes, and all political Administrations, are the Ministers of God, *περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ*, attending constantly upon this very thing: And if these Extremes, the highest and lowest of all Vocations, are Services of God; if the highest upon that Score be tied to so much Diligence, then surely all middle Places upon the same Account of Conscience toward God do exact no less.

If he that hath one Talent, and he that hath ten must both improve them for God's Interest; then he that hath two, or three, or more, is obliged to the same Duty proportionably.

Every one should consider the World as the Family of that great *Paterfamilias* (of whom the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named) and himself as an Officer or Servant therein, by God's Will and Designation constituted in that Employment, into which Providence hath cast him; to confer in his Order and Way, somewhat toward a Provision for the Maintenance of himself, and of his Fellow-Servants. Of a superiour Officer our Lord saith, *Who is that faithful and wise Servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his Household, to give them their meat in due season?* So the greatest Men are as Stewards, Treasurers, Comptrollers, or Purveyors; the rest are inferiour Servants, in their proper Rank and Capacity.

And he that with Diligence performeth his respective Duty (be it high and honourable, or mean and contemptible in outward Appearance) will please God, as keeping good Order, and as being useful to his Service; so that upon the Reckoning God will say to him, *Well done good and faithful Servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* But he that doth otherwise (behaving himself carelessly or sluggishly in his Business) will offend God, as committing Disorder, and as being unprofitable.

He committeth Disorder, according to that of St. Paul; *We hear there are some, which walk among you disorderly, not working at all.* His Sentence and Doom



Mat. 25. 26. will be, according to our Lord, *O thou wicked and slothful Servant—Cast the un-*  
 30. *profitable Servant into utter darkness*; which Words are spoken in relation to one, who being a Flatterer, or Sluggard in his Calling, did not improve the special Talent entrusted with him for God's Service.

In fine, if we are conscientiously industrious in our Vocation, we shall assuredly find the Blessing of God thereon; and that he thereby will convey good Success, Comfort, competent Wealth, a fair Reputation, all desirable Good unto us; for as all these things are promised to Industry, so the Promise especially doth belong to that Industry, which a Man doth exercise in an orderly Course of Action in his own Way; or rather in God's Way, wherein Divine Providence hath set him.

Prov. 21. 11.  
 Prov. 10. 4.  
 13. 11.

An irregular or impertinent Laboriousness, out of a Man's Calling or Sphere; a being diligent in other Men's Affairs, invading their Office (as if I a Priest will be trading, a Layman preaching) may not claim the Benefit of those Promises or the Blessings of Industry; But a Husbandman, who (with conscientious Regard to God, and Confidence in him) is painful in tilling his Ground, may expect a good Crop, a Merchant who (upon the same Principle, with the like Disposition) earnestly followeth his Trade, may hope for safe Voyages and good Markets; A Prince carefully minding his Affairs may look for Peace and Prosperity to his Country; a Scholar studying hard may be well assured of getting Knowledge, and finding Truth; all, who with honest Diligence constantly do pursue their Business, may confidently and cheerfully hope to reap the Advantages suitable to it from the favourable Blessing of God. So that we have all Reason to observe the Apostle's Precept, *Not to be slothful in business*.

I should apply this Doctrine to our own Case, urging its Practice by Considerations peculiar to our Vocation; but having already passed the Bounds of Time, I reserve the doing it to another Opportunity.

1 Theff. 5. 23.  
 Heb. 13. 20.

*Now the God of Peace sanctify you wholly, and make you perfect in every good work to do his Will; working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight; through our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ; To whom for ever be all Glory and Praise. AMEN.*

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## SERMON XXI.

### Of INDUSTRY in our particular Calling, as Gentlemen.

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ROM. XII. 11.

*Not slothful in Business.*

**I** HAVE largely treated upon the Duty recommended in this Precept, and urged the Observance of it in general, at a Distance; I now intend more particularly and closely to apply it, in reference to those Persons who seem more especially obliged to it, and whose observing it may prove of greatest Consequence to publick Good; the which Application may also be most suitable and profitable to this Audience; those Persons are of two Sorts; the one *Gentlemen*, the other *Scholars*.

I. The First Place, as Civility demandeth, we assign to *Gentlemen*; or Persons of eminent Rank in the World, well allied, graced with Honour, and furnished with Wealth; the which sort of Persons I conceive in a high Degree obliged to exercise Industry in Business.

This



This at first hearing may seem a little Paradoxical and strange; for who have less Business than Gentlemen, who do need less Industry than they? He that hath a fair Estate, and can live on his Means, what hath he to do, what Labour or Trouble can be exacted of him, what hath he to think on, or trouble his Head with, but how to invent Recreations and Pastimes to divert himself, and spend his vast Leisure pleasantly? Why should he not be allowed to enjoy himself, and the Benefits, which Nature or Fortune have freely dispensed to him, as he thinketh best, without Offence? Why may he not say with the rich Man in the Gospel, *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry?* Is it not often said by the *Wise-man*, that there is *nothing better under the Sun, than that a man should make his soul to enjoy good* in a chearful and comfortable Fruition of his Estate? According to the passable Notion and Definition, *What is a Gentleman but his Pleasure?*

Luke 12. 19.

Eccles. 2. 24.

3. 22. 5. 18.

8. 15.

If this be true, if a Gentleman be nothing else but this, then truly he is a sad Piece, the most inconsiderable, the most despicable, the most pitiful and wretched Creature in the World: If it is his Privilege to do nothing, it is his Privilege to be most unhappy; and to be so, will be his Fate, if he live according to it; for he that is of no Worth or Use, who produceth no beneficial Fruit, who performeth no Service to God, or to the World, what Title can he have to Happiness? What Capacity thereof? What Reward can he claim? What Comfort can he feel? To what Temptations is he exposed? What Guilt will he incur?

But in truth it is far otherwise; to suppose that a Gentleman is loose from Business, is a great Mistake; for indeed no Man hath more to do, no Man lieth under greater Engagements to Industry than he.

He is deeply obliged to be continually busie in more Ways than other Men, who have but one simple Calling or Occupation allotted to them; and that upon a triple Account; in respect to God, to the World, and to himself.

1. He is first obliged to continual Employment in respect to God.

He out of a grateful Regard to Divine Bounty for the Eminency of his Station, adorned with Dignity and Repute, for the plentiful Accommodations and Comforts of his Life, for his Exemption from those pinching Wants, those meaner Cares, those sordid Entertainments, and those toilsome Drudgeries, to which other Men are subject, is bound to be more diligent in God's Service, employing all the Advantages of his State to the Glory of his munificent Benefactor, to whose good Providence alone he doth owe them; for *who maketh him to differ from another?* 1 Cor. 4. 7. And *what hath he that he did not receive from God's free Bounty?*

In proportion to the Bulk of his Fortune, his Heart should be enlarged with a thankful Sense of God's Goodness to him; his Mouth should ever be filled with Acknowledgment and Praise, he should always be ready to express his grateful Resentment of so great and peculiar Obligations.

He should dedicate larger Portions of that free Leisure which God hath granted to him, in waiting upon God, and constant Performances of Devotion.

He, in frequently reflecting on the particular ample Favours of God to him, should imitate the Holy Psalmist, that illustrious Pattern of great and fortunate Men; saying after him, with his Spirit and Disposition of Soul; *Thou hast brought me to great honour, and comforted me on every side, therefore will I praise thee and thy faithfulness, O God.* Psal. 71. 21.

*Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: Thou hast set my feet in a large room: Thou preparest a table before me; — Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over; — to the end that my glory may sing praise unto thee, and not be silent: The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot, the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly heritage; therefore I will bless the Lord.* Psal. 30. 7. Psal. 31. 8. Psal. 23. 5. Psal. 30. 12. Psal. 16. 5.

In conceiving such Meditations, his Head and his Heart should constantly be employed; as also in contriving ways of declaring and discharging real Gratitude; asking himself, *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his Benefits?* What shall I render to him, not only as a Man for all the Gifts of Nature, as a Christian for all the Blessings of Grace; but as a Gentleman also, for the many Advantages of this my Condition, beyond so many of my Brethren, by special Providence indulged to me? Psal. 116. 12.



He hath all the common Duties of Piety, of Charity, of Sobriety to discharge with Fidelity; for being a Gentleman doth not exempt him from being a Christian, but rather more strictly doth engage him to be such in a higher Degree than others; It is an Obligation peculiarly incumbent on him, in return for God's peculiar Favours, to pay God all due Obedience, and to exercise himself in all good Works; Disobedience being a more heinous Crime in him than in others, who have not such Encouragements to serve God.

His Obedience may be inculcated by those Arguments which *Joshua* and *Samuel* did use in pressing it on the *Israelites*; Only (saith *Samuel*) fear the Lord and serve him in truth, for consider how great things God hath done for you; and I have given you (saith God by *Joshua*) a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not; and ye dwell in them; Of the vine-yards and olive-yards which ye planted not, do ye eat; Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth.

His Disobedience may be aggravated, as *Nebemiah* did that of the *Israelites*, They took strong cities and a fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells digged, vine-yards, and olive-yards, and fruit-trees in abundance; so they did eat and were filled, and became fat; and delighted themselves in thy great goodness; nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs — they have not served thee in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness, which thou gavest them; neither turned they from their wicked works.

A Gentleman hath more Talents committed to him, and consequently more Employment required of him; If a rustick Labourer, or a Mechanick Artisan hath one Talent, a Gentleman hath ten; He hath innate Vigour of Spirit, and Height of Courage fortified by Use, he hath Accomplishment and Refinement of Parts by liberal Education, he hath the Succours of Parentage, Alliance and Friendship; he hath Wealth, he hath Honour, he hath Power and Authority, he hath command of Time and Leisure; he hath so many precious and useful Talents entrusted to him, not to be wrapped up in a napkin, or hidden under-ground; not to be squandred away in private Satisfaction; but for negotiation, to be put out to use, to be improved in the most advantageous Way to God's Service: Every Talent doth require a particular Care and Pains to manage it well.

He particularly is God's Steward, entrusted with God's Substance, for the Sustenance and Supply of God's Family; to relieve his Fellow-Servants in their Need, upon seasonable Occasions by Hospitality, Mercy, and charitable Beneficence; according to that Intimation of our Lord, Who is that faithful and wise steward whom his Lord shall make ruler of his household to give them their portion and meat in due season? And according to those Apostolical Precepts, As every one hath received a gift (or special Favour,) even so minister the same to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; and Charge the rich in this world, — that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.

And he that is oblig'd to purvey for so many, and so to abound in good Works, how can he want Business? How can he pretend to a *Writ of Ease*?

Surely that Gentleman is very blind, and very barren of Invention, who is to seek for Work fit for him, or cannot easily discern many Employments belonging to him, of great Concern and Consequence.

It is easie to prompt and shew him many Businesses, indispensibly belonging to him, as such.

It is his Business to minister Relief to his poor Neighbours in their Wants and Distresses by his Wealth. It is his Business to direct and advise the Ignorant, to comfort the Afflicted, to reclaim the Wicked, and encourage the Good by his Wisdom. It is his Business to protect the Weak, to rescue the Oppressed, to ease those who groan under heavy Burthens, by his Power; to be such a Gentleman and so employed as *Job* was; who did not eat his morsel alone, so that the fatherless did not eat thereof; who did not withhold the poor from their desire, or cause the eyes of the widow to fail; who did not see any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; who delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him.

It is his Business to be hospitable; kind and helpful to Strangers; following those noble Gentlemen, *Abraham* and *Lot*, who were so ready to invite and entertain Strangers with bountiful Courtesie.

It



It is his Business to maintain Peace, and appease Dissentions among his Neighbours, interposing his Counsel and Authority in order thereto; whereto he hath that brave Gentleman *Moses* recommended for his Pattern.

Exod. 2. 12.

It is his Business to promote the Welfare and Prosperity of his Country with his best Endeavours, and by all his Interest; in which Practice the Sacred History doth propound divers gallant Gentlemen (*Joseph, Moses, Samuel, Nehemiah, Daniel, Mordecai*, and all such renowned Patriots) to guide him.

Acts 7. 26.

Jud. 5. 9.

It is his Business to govern his Family well; to educate his Children in Piety and Vertue; to keep his Servants in good Order.

Josh. 24. 15.

Psalm. 101.

It is his Business to look to his Estate, and to keep it from wasting; that he may sustain the Repute of his Person and Quality with Decency; that he may be furnished with Ability to do Good, may provide well for his Family, may be Hospitable, may have wherewith to help his Brethren; for if, according to St. Paul's Injunction, a Man should *work with his own hands, that he may have somewhat to impart to him that needeth*; then must he that hath an Estate, be careful to preserve it, for the same good Purpose.

1 Peter 4. 10.

Eph. 4. 28.

It is his Business to cultivate his Mind with Knowledge, with generous Dispositions, with all worthy Accomplishments befitting his Condition, and qualifying him for Honourable Action; so that he may excel, and bear himself above the vulgar Level no less in real inward Worth, than in exterior Garb; that he be not a Gentleman merely in Name or Shew.

It is Business (and that no slight or easie Business) to eschew the Vices, to check the Passions, to withstand the Temptations, to which his Condition is liable; taking heed that his Wealth, Honour, and Power do not betray him into Pride, Insolence, or Contempt of his poorer Brethren; unto Injustice or Oppression; unto Luxury and riotous Excess; unto Sloth, Stupidity, Forgetfulness of God, and irreligious Prophaneness.

Ardua nam

res est opibus

non tradere

mores.

It is a Business especially incumbent on him to be careful of his Ways, that they may have good Influence on others, who are apt to look upon him as their Guide and Pattern.

He should labour and study to be a Leader unto Vertue, and a Notable Promoter thereof; directing and exciting Men thereto by his exemplary Conversation; encouraging them by his Countenance and Authority; rewarding the Goodness of meaner People by his Bounty and Favour: He should be such a Gentleman as *Noah*, who *preached righteousness* by his Words and Works before a prophane World.

Such particular Affairs hath every Person of Quality, Credit, Wealth and Interest, allotted to him by God, and laid on him as Duties; the which to discharge faithfully, will enough employ a Man, and doth require Industry, much Care, much Pains; excluding Sloth and Negligence: So that it is impossible for a Sluggard to be a worthy Gentleman, vertuously disposed, a charitable Neighbour, a good Patriot, a good Husband of his Estate; any thing of that, to which God, by setting him in such a Station, doth call him.

Thus is a Gentleman obliged to Industry in respect of God, who justly doth exact those Labours of Piety, Charity, and all Vertue from him. Farther,

2. He hath also Obligations to Mankind, demanding Industry from him, upon Accounts of common Humanity, Equity and Ingenuity; For,

How can he fairly subsist upon the common Industry of Mankind without bearing a Share thereof? How can he well satisfy himself to dwell stately, to feed daintily, to be finely clad, to maintain a pompous Retinue merely upon the Sweat and Toil of others, without himself rendering a Compensation, or making some competent Returns of Care and Pain, redounding to the Good of his Neighbour?

How can he justly claim, or reasonably expect from the World the Respect agreeable to his Rank, if he doth not by worthy Performances conduce to the Benefit of it? Can Men be obliged to regard those, from whom they receive no Good?

If no Gentleman be tied to serve the Publick, or to yield Help in sustaining the common Burthens, and supplying the Needs of Mankind, then is the whole Order merely a Burthen, and an Offence to the World; a Race of Drones, a Pack of Cyphers in the Common-wealth, standing for nothing, deserving no Consideration

or



or Regard : And if any are bound, then all are ; for why should the whole Burthen lie on some, while others are exempted ?

It is indeed supposed, that all are bound thereto, seeing that all have Recompences publickly allowed to them upon such Considerations ; divers Respects and Privileges peculiar to the Order, grounded upon this Supposition, that they deserve such Advantages by conferring notable Benefit to the Publick ; the which indeed it were an Arrogance to seek, and an Iniquity to accept for doing nothing.

It is an unsufferable Pride for any Man to pretend, or conceit himself to differ so much from his Brethren, that he may be allowed to live in ease and Sloth, while the rest of Mankind are subject to continual Toil and Trouble. Moreover,

A Gentleman is bound to be industrious for his own sake ; it is a Duty which he oweth to himself, to his Honour, to his Interest, to his Welfare. He cannot without Industry continue like himself, or maintain the Honour and Repute becoming his Quality and State ; or secure himself from Contempt and Disgrace ; for to be honourable and slothful are things inconsistent ; seeing Honour doth not grow, nor can subsist without undertaking worthy Designs, constantly pursuing them, and happily atchieving them ; it is the Fruit and Reward of such Actions, which are not performed with Ease.

External Respect and a Semblance of Honour, for the sake of publick Order, may be due to an exterior Rank or Title ; but to pay this, is not to honour the Person, but his Title, because it is supposed, that Men of real Worth and Use do bear it ; or, left by refusing it to one, the whole Order may seem disrespected ; but yet true Honour, or mental Esteem is not due upon such Accounts ; nor is it possible to render it unto any Person, who doth not by worthy Qualities and good Deeds appear to merit it.

Nor can a Gentleman without Industry, uphold his real Interests against the Attempts of Envy, of Treachery, of Flattery, of Sycophantry, of Avarice, to which his Condition is obnoxious ; to preserve his Wealth and Estate, which are the Supports of his Quality, he must endure Care and Pains ; otherwise he will by greedy Harpies, and crafty Lurchers be rifled or cozened of his Substance ; it will of it self go to wreck, and be imbezzled by Negligence.

He cannot without Industry guard his Personal Welfare from manifold Inconveniences, Molestations and Mischiefs ; Idleness it self will be very troublesome and irksome to him. His Time will lie upon his Hands, as a pestering Incumbrance. His Mind will be infested with various Distractions and Distempers ; vain and sad Thoughts, foul Lusts, and unquiet Passions will spring up therein, as Weeds in a neglected Soil. His Body will languish and become destitute of Health, of Vigour, of Activity, for want of due Exercise. All the Mischiefs which naturally do spring from Sloth and Stupidity will seize upon him.

4. Thus upon various Accounts a Gentleman is engag'd to Business, and concern'd to exercise Industry therein ; we may add, that indeed the very Nature of Gentility, or the true Notion of a Gentleman doth imply so much.

For what, I pray, is a Gentleman, what Properties hath he, what Qualities are characteristical or peculiar to him, whereby he is distinguished from others, and raised above the Vulgar ? Are they not especially two, *Courage* and *Courtesie* ? Which he that wanteth is not otherwise than equivocally a Gentleman, as an Image or a Carcase is a Man ; without which Gentility in a conspicuous Degree is no more than a vain Show, or an empty Name ; and these plainly do involve Industry, do exclude Slothfulness ; for *Courage* doth prompt boldly to undertake, and resolutely to dispatch great Enterprizes and Employments of Difficulty : It is not seen in a flaunting Garb, or strutting Deportment ; not in hectorly, ruffian-like swaggering or huffing ; not in high Looks or big Words ; but in stout and gallant Deeds, employing Vigour of Mind and Heart to achieve them ; how can a Man otherwise approve himself for courageous, than by signaling himself in such a way ?

And for *Courtesie*, how otherwise can it be well displayed, than in sedulous Activity for the Good of Men ; It surely doth not consist in modish Forms of Address, or complemental Expressions, or hollow Professions, commonly void of Meaning, or of Sincerity ; but in real Performances of Beneficence, when Occasion doth invite, and in waiting for Opportunities to do Good ; the which Practice is accompanied with some Care and Pain, adding a Price to it ; for an easie

Cour-



Courtesie is therefore small, because easie, and may be deemed to proceed rather from ordinary Humanity, than from gentile Disposition; so that in fine, he alone doth appear truly a Gentleman, who hath the Heart to undergo hard Tasks for publick Good, and willingly taketh Pains to oblige his Neighbours and Friends.

5. The Work indeed of Gentlemen is not so gross, but it may be as smart and painful as any other. For all hard Work is not manual; there are other Instruments of Action beside the Plow, the Spade, the Hammer, the Shuttle; nor doth every Work produce Sweat, and visible tiring of Body; the Head may work hard in Contrivance of good Designs; the Tongue may be very active in dispensing Advice, Perswasion, Comfort, and Edification in Vertue: A Man may bestir himself in *going about to do good*; these are Works imploying the cleanly Industry of a Gentleman.

6. In such Works it was, that the truest and greatest Pattern of Gentility that ever was, did employ himself: Who was that? Even our Lord himself; for he had no particular Trade or Profession: No Man can be more loose from any Engagement to the World than he was; no Man had less need of Business or Pains-taking than he; for he had a vast Estate, being *heir of all things*, all the World being at his Disposal, yea, infinitely more, it being in his Power with a Word, to create whatever he would to serve his Need, or satisfy his Pleasure; Omnipotency being his Treasure and Supply; he had a Retinue of Angels to wait on him, and minister to him; whatever Sufficiency any Man can fancy to himself to dispense with his taking pains, that had he in a far higher Degree: Yet did *Isa. 53. 11* he find Work for himself, and continually was employed in performing Service to God, and imparting Benefits to Men; nor was ever Industry exercised upon Earth comparable to his.

Gentlemen therefore would do well to make him the Pattern of their Life, to whose Industry they must be beholden for their Salvation: In order whereto we recommend them to his Grace.

## SERMON XXII.

### Of INDUSTRY in our particular Calling, as *Scholars*.

ROM. XII. 11.

*Not slothful in Business.*

**I** Proceed to the other Sort of Persons, whom we did propound, Namely,

II. *Scholars*, and that on them particularly great Engagements do lie to be industrious, is most evident from various Considerations.

The Nature and Design of this Calling doth suppose Industry; the Matter and Extent of it doth require Industry; the Worth of it doth highly deserve Industry. We are in special Gratitude to God, in Charity to Men, in due Regard to our selves bound unto it.

1. First, I say, the Nature and Design of our Calling doth suppose Industry: *Eccles. 2. 21* *There is* (saith the divine Preacher) *a man whose labour is in wisdom, in knowledge, and in equity*; Such Men are Scholars; so that we are indeed no Scholars, but absurd Usurpers of the Name, if we are not laborious; for what is a Scholar, but one who retireth his Person, and avocateth his Mind from other Occupations, and worldly



Ἡ σοφία  
γραμματικῶς  
ἐν ἰνκαίῃ  
ἐκείνῃ.  
Ecc. 38. 24.

worldly Entertainments, that he may *ἡσυχάζειν, vacare studiis*, employ his Mind and Leisure on Study and Learning, in the Search of Truth, the Quest of Knowledge, the Improvement of his Reason. Wherefore an idle Scholar, a lazy Student, a sluggish Man of Learning, is Nonfence.

What is Learning but a diligent Attendance to Instruction of Masters, skilled in any Knowledge, and conveying their Notions to us in Word or Writing?

What is Study, but an earnest, steady, persevering Application of Mind to some Matter, on which we fix our Thoughts, with intent to see through it? What in Solomon's Language are these *Scholastick* Occupations, but *inclining the ear*, and *applying our heart to understanding*; than which commonly there is nothing more laborious, more straining Nature, and more tiring our Spirits; whence it is well compared to the most painful Exercises of Body and Soul?

The *Wise-man*, advising Men to seek Wisdom, the which is the proper Design of our Calling, doth intimate that Work to be like digging in the Mines for Silver, and like searching all about for concealed Treasure; than which there can hardly be any more difficult and painful Task, *If (saith he) thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand.*—Other-where he compareth the same Work to assiduous watching and waiting, like that of a Guard or a Client, which are the greatest Instances of Diligence; *Blessed (saith he; or Wisdom by him saith, Blessed) is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my Gates, waiting at the posts of my Doors.*

Wherefore if we will approve our selves to be what we are called, and what we pretend to be, if we will avoid being Impostors, assuming a Name not due to us, we must not be slothful. Farther,

2. The Matter and Extent of our Business doth require Industry from us: The Matter of it, which is Truth and Knowledge; the Extent which is very large and comprehensive, taking in all Truth, all Knowledge, worthy our Study, and useful for the Designs of it.

Our Business is to find Truth; the which, even in Matters of high Importance, is not easily to be discovered; being as a Vein of Silver, encompassed with Earth and mixed with Dross, deeply laid in the Obscurity of Things, wrapt up in false Appearances, entangled with Objections, and perplexed with Debates; being therefore not readily discoverable; especially by Minds clouded with Prejudices, Lusts, Passions, partial Affections, Appetites of Honour and Interest; whence to descry it requireth the most curious Observation and solicitous Circumspection that can be; together with great Pains in the Preparation and Purgation of our Minds toward the Enquiry of it.

Our Business is to attain Knowledge, not concerning obvious and vulgar Matters, but about sublime, abstruse, intricate and knotty Subjects, remote from common Observation and Sense; to get sure and exact Notions about which, will try the best Forces of our Mind with their utmost Endeavours; in firmly settling Principles, in strictly deducing Consequences, in orderly digesting Conclusions, in faithfully retaining what we learn by our Contemplation and Study.

And if to get a competent Knowledge about a few things, or to be reasonably skilful in any sort of Learning, be difficult, how much Industry doth it require to be well seen in many, or to have waded through the vast Compass of Learning, in no part whereof a Scholar may conveniently or handsomely be ignorant? Seeing there is such a Connexion of Things, and Dependance of Notions, that one Part of Learning doth confer Light to another, that a Man can hardly well understand any thing without knowing divers other things; that he will be a lame Scholar, who hath not an Insight into many kinds of Knowledge, that he can hardly be a good Scholar who is not a general one.

To understand so many Languages (which are the Shells of Knowledge) to comprehend so many Sciences (full of various Theorems and Problems) to peruse so many Histories (of ancient and modern times;) to know the World, both natural and human; to be acquainted with the various Inventions, Inquiries, Opinions and Controversies of learned Men; to skill the Arts of expressing our Mind, and imparting our Conceptions with Advantage, so as to instruct or persuade others; these are Works indeed, which will exercise and strain our Faculties (our Reason, our Fancy, our Memory) in painful Study.

The



The Knowledge of such Things is not innate to us; it doth not of it self spring up in our Minds; it is not any ways incident by Chance, or infus'd by Grace (except rarely by Miracle;) common Observation doth not produce it; it cannot be purchased at any rate, except by that, for which it was said of old, *the Dii laboribus omnia vendunt.* Gods sell all things, that is for Pains; without which, the best Wit and greatest Capacity may not render a Man learned, as the best Soil will not yield good Fruit or Grain, if they be not planted or sown therein.

Consider, if you please, what a Scholar *Solomon* was; beside his Skill in *Politics*, which was his principal Faculty and Profession, whereby he did with admirable Dexterity and Prudence manage the Affairs of that great Kingdom, *judging* <sup>1 Kings 3. 9.</sup> *his people, and discerning what was good, and bad;* accurately dispensing Justice; settling his Country in a flourishing state of Peace, Order, Plenty and Wealth; largely extending his Territory; so that his Wisdom of this kind was famous <sup>1 Kings 4. 20.</sup> over the Earth; Beside, I say, this civil Wisdom, he had an exquisite Skill in *Natural Philosophy* and *Medicine*; For *He spake of Trees* (or Plants) *from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall:* *He spake also of* <sup>1 Kings 10. 6.</sup> *beasts and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.* <sup>1 Kings 4. 33.</sup>

He was well verfed in the *Mathematics*; for it is said, *Solomon's wisdom excelled* <sup>1 Kings 4. 30.</sup> *the wisdom of all the children of the East-Country, and all the wisdom of Egypt;* the Wisdom of which Nations did consist in those Sciences. And of his *Mechanick* Skill, he left for a Monument, the most glorious Structure that ever stood on Earth.

He was very skilful in Poetry and Musick; for he did himself *compose above a* <sup>1 Kings 4. 32.</sup> *thousand songs;* whereof one yet extant declareth the Loftiness of his Fancy, the Richness of his Vein, and the Elegancy of his Style.

He had great Ability in Rhetorick; according to that in *Wisdom*, *God granted* <sup>Sap. 7. 15.</sup> *me to speak as I would;* and that in *Ecclesiastes*, *The Preacher sought to find out ac-* <sup>Ecclef. 12. 10.</sup> *ceptable Words;* a great Instance of which Faculty, we have in that admirable Prayer of his Composure at the Dedication of the Temple. <sup>1 Kings 8.</sup>

He did wonderfully excel in *Eshicks*; concerning which he *spake three thousand* <sup>1 Kings 4. 32.</sup> *Proverbs*, or moral Aphorisms; and *Moreover* (saith *Ecclesiastes*) *because the Preacher* <sup>Ecclef. 12. 9.</sup> *was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many Proverbs;* the which did contain a great Variety of notable Observations, and useful Directions for common Life, couched in pithy Expressions.

As for *Theology*, as the Study of that was the chief Study to which he exhorteth others (as to the *head*, or principal Part of *wisdom*) so questionless he was himself most conversant therein; for Proof whereof he did leave so many excellent Theorems and Precepts of Divinity to us. <sup>Prov. 2. 5.</sup>

In fine, there is no sort of Knowledge, to which he did not apply his Study; witness himself in those Words, *I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom con-* <sup>Ecclef. 1. 13.</sup> *cerning all things that are under heaven.*

Such a Scholar was he; and such if we have a noble Ambition to be, we must use the Course he did; which was first in his Heart to prefer Wisdom before all worldly things; then to pray to God for it, or for his Blessing in our quest of it; then to use the Means of attaining it, diligent Searching and hard Study; for that this was his method he telleth us, *I* (saith he) *applied my heart to know, and to search,* <sup>Ecclef. 7. 25.</sup> *and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things.*

Such Considerations shew the Necessity of Industry for a Scholar; But, 3. The Worth, and Excellency, and great Utility, together with the Pleasantness of his Vocation, deserving the highest Industry, do superadd much Obligation thereto.

We are much bound to be diligent out of Ingenuity, and in Gratitude to God, who by his gracious Providence hath assigned to us a Calling so worthy, an Employment so comfortable, a way of Life no less commodious, beneficial and delightful to our selves, than serviceable to God, and useful for the World.

If we had our Option and Choice, what Calling would we desire before this of any whereto Men are affixed? How could we better employ our Mind, or place our Labour, or spend our Time, or pass our Pilgrimage in this World, than in scholastical Occupations?



It were hard to reckon up, or to express the numberless great Advantages of this Calling, I shall therefore only touch some, which readily fall under my Thought, recommending its Value to us.

It is a Calling, the Design whereof conspireth with the general End of our Being; the Perfection of our Nature in its Endowments, and the Fruition of it in its best Operations.

It is a Calling that doth not employ us in bodily Toil, in worldly Care, in Pursuit of trivial Affairs, in fordid Drudgeries; but in those Angelical Operations of Soul, the Contemplation of Truth, and Attainment of Wisdom; which are the worthiest Exercises of our Reason, and sweetest Entertainments of our Mind; the most precious Wealth, and most beautiful Ornaments of our Soul; whereby our Faculties are improved, are polished and refined, are enlarged in their Power and Use by habitual Accessions: the which are conducive to our own greatest Profit and Benefit, as serving to rectifie our Wills, to compose our Affections, to

Prov. 2. 4, 10.

guide our Lives in the Ways of Vertue, to bring us unto Felicity.

It is a Calling, which being duly follow'd, will most sever us from the vulgar sort of Men, and advance us above the common Pitch; enduing us with Light to see farther than other Men, disposing us to affect better things, and to slight those meaner Objects of Human Desire, on which Men commonly dote; freeing us from the erroneous Conceits, and from the perverse Affections of common People. It is said διπλὴν ὁρᾶσιν οἱ μαθόντες γράμματα, *men of learning are double-sighted*; but it is true, that in many cases they see infinitely farther than a vulgar Sight doth reach; and if a Man by serious Study doth acquire a clear and solid Judgment of things, so as to assign to each its due Weight and Price; if he accordingly be inclined in his Heart to affect and pursue them; if from clear and right Notions of Things, a meek and ingenuous Temper of Mind, a Command and Moderation of Passions, a firm Integrity, and a cordial Love of Goodness do spring, he thereby becometh another kind of thing, much different from those brutish Men (Beasts of the People) who blindly follow the Motions of their sensual Appetite, or the Suggestions of their Fancy, or their mistaken Prejudices.

It is a Calling which hath these considerable Advantages, that by vertue of Improvement therein, we can see with our own Eyes, and guide our selves by our own Reasons, not being led blind-fold about, or depending precariously on the Conduct of others in Matters of highest Concern to us. That we are exempted from giddy Credulity, from wavering Levity, from fond Admiration of Persons and Things, being able to distinguish of Things, and to settle our Judgments about them, and to get an intimate Acquaintance with them, assuring to us their true Nature and Worth; that we are also thereby rescu'd from admiring our selves, and that over-weening Self-conceitedness, of which the *Wise-man* saith,

Prov. 26. 16.

*The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason.*

It is a Calling, whereby we are qualified and enabled to do God Service; to gratifie his Desires, to promote his Honour, to advance his Interests; to render his Name glorious in the World; by teaching, maintaining and propagating his Truth; by persuading Men to render their due Love, Reverence, and Obedience to him; than which we can have no more honourable or satisfactory Employment; more like to that of the glorious and blessed Spirits.

It is a Calling, the due Prosecution whereof doth ingratiate us with God, and procureth his Favour; rendring us fit Objects of his Love, and entitling us thereto in regard to our Qualities, and Recompence of our Works: For *God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom*; and, *So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.*

Sap. 7. 28.

Psal. 4. 5.

Prov. 3. 4.

It is a Calling, whereby with greatest Advantage we may benefit Men, and deserve well of the World; drawing Men to the Knowledge and Service of God, reclaiming them from Errour and Sin, rescuing them from Misery, and conducting them to Happiness; by clear Instruction, by faithful Admonition, by powerful Exhortation: And what can be more noble, than to be the Lights of the World, the Guides of Practice to Men, the Authors of so much Good, so egregious Benefactors to Mankind?

It is a Calling most exempt from the Cares, the Crosses, the Turmoils, the factious Jars, the anxious Intrigues, the vexatious Molestations of the World; its



its Business lying out of the Road of those Mischiefs, wholly lying in solitary Retirement, or being transacted in the most innocent and ingenuous Company.

It is a Calling least subject to any Danger or Disappointment; wherein we may well be assured not to miscarry or lose our Labour; for the Merchant indeed by manifold Accidents may lose his Voyage; or find a bad Market; the Husbandman may plough and sow in vain; but the Student hardly can fail of improving his Stock, and reaping a good Crop of Knowledge; especially if he study with a conscientious Mind, and pious Reverence to God, imploring his gracious Help and Blessing.

It is a Calling, the Industry us'd wherein doth abundantly recompense it self, by the Pleasure and Sweetness which it carrieth in it; so that the more Pains one taketh, the more Delight he findeth, feeling himself proportionably to grow in Knowledge; and that his Work becometh continually more easie to him.

It is a Calling, the Business whereof doth so exercise as not to weary, so entertain as not to cloy us; being not (as other Occupations are) a drawing in a Mill, or a nauseous (tedious) Repetition of the same Work; but a continual Progress toward fresh Objects; our Mind not being staked to one or a few poor Matters, but having immense Fields of Contemplation, wherein it may everlastingly expatiate, with great Proficiency and Pleasure.

It is a Calling which doth ever afford plentiful Fruit, even in regard to the Conveniencies of this present and temporal State; the which sufficiently will requite the Pains expended thereon: For if we be honestly Industrious we shall not want Success; and succeeding we shall not want a Competence of Wealth, of Reputation, of Interest in the World: For concerning Wisdom, which is the Result of honest Study, the *Wise-man* telleth us, *Riches and Honour are with her, yea, durable riches and righteousness: length of days are in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour: Exalt her, and she shall promote thee, she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her; she shall give to thine head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee:* In common Experience the Wealth of the Mind doth qualifie for Employments, which have good Recompences annexed to them; and neither God nor Man will suffer him long to want, who is endowed with worthy Accomplishments of Knowledge: It was a ridiculous Providence in *Nero*, that if he should chance to lose his Empire, he might live by fidling; yet his Motto was good; and *Dionysius*, another Tyrant, found the Benefit of it; *τὸ πρῶτον γὰρ τῶν τεχνῶν*, he that hath any good Art, hath therein an Estate, and Land in every Place; he is secured against being reduc'd to Extremity of any Misfortune: *Wisdom* (saith the *Wise-man*) *is a defence, and money is a defence; but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it:* Money is a Defence, of which Fortune may bereave us; but Wisdom is beyond its Attacks; being a Treasure seated in a Place inaccessible to external Impressions.

And as a learned Man cannot be destitute of Substance; so he cannot want Credit, having such an Ornament, than which none hath a more general Estimation; and which can be of low Rate only among that sort of Folk, to whom *Solomon* saith, *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? — and fools hate knowledge:* It is that which recommendeth a Man in all Company, and procureth Regard, every one yielding \* Attention and Acceptance to instructive, neat, apposite Discourse, (that which the Scripture calleth *acceptable, pleasant gracious words*) Men think themselves obliged thereby by receiving Information and Satisfaction from it; and accordingly *Every man* (saith the *Wise-man*) *shall kiss his lips, that giveth a right answer; and — for the grace of his lips the King shall be his friend; and, the words of a wise-man's mouth are gracious.* It is that, an Eminency wherein purchaseth lasting Fame, and a Life after Death, in the good Memory and Opinion of Posterity; *Many shall commend his understanding, and so long as the world endureth, it shall not be blotted out, his memorial shall not depart away, and his name shall live from generation to generation.* A Fame no less great, and far more innocent than Acts of Chivalry and Martial Prowess; for is not *Aristotle* as renown'd for teaching the World with his Pen, as *Alexander* for conquering it with his Sword? Is not one far oftner mentioned than the other? Do not Men hold themselves much more oblig'd to the Learning of the Philosopher, than to the Valour of the Warriour? Indeed the Fame of all others is indebted to the Pains of the Scholar, and could not

Γρεγοριος δὲ  
αὐτὸς ποιεῖ δὲ  
δασκόμενός.

Prov. 8. 18.  
3. 16. 4. 9.  
10.

Ecc. 7. 12.

Prov. 12. 8.  
A man shall  
be commended  
according to  
his wisdom.  
Prov. 1. 22.  
1. 7.

\*Prov. 22. 17.

Prov. 24. 26.  
Prov. 22. 15.  
26.  
Eccles. 10. 12.  
Ecclesi. 39. 9.



subsist, but with and by his Fame, *Dignum laude virum musa vetat mori*; Learning consecrateth it self and its Subject together, to immortal Remembrance.

It is a Calling that fitteth a Man for all Conditions and Fortunes; so that he can enjoy Prosperity with Moderation, and sustain Adversity with Comfort: He that loveth a Book, will never want a faithful Friend, a wholesome Counsellour, a chearful Companion, an effectual Comforter. By Study, by reading, by thinking, one may innocently divert, and pleasantly entertain himself, as in all Weathers, so in all Fortunes.

In fine, it is a Calling, which Solomon, who had curiously observed and exactly compared and scann'd, by Reason and by Experience all other Occupations and Ways of Life, did prefer above all others; and we may presume would sooner have parted with his royal State, than with his Learning; for *Wisdom* (saith he) *is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding; and Then I saw* (then, that is, after a serious Disquisition and Discussion of Things, I saw) *that wisdom exceedeth folly* (that is, Knowledge excelleth Ignorance) *as light excelleth darkness.*

Prov. 4. 7.

Ecclef. 2. 13.

These Things and much more may be said of Learning in general; but if more distinctly we survey each Part, and each Object of it, we shall find, that each doth yield considerable Emoluments and Delights; Benefit to our Soul, Advantage to our Life, Satisfaction to our Mind.

The Observation of Things, and Collection of Experiments, how doth it enrich the Mind with *Ideas*, and breed a kind of familiar Acquaintance with all Things, so that nothing doth surprize us, or strike our Mind with Astonishment and Admiration? And if our eye be not satisfied with seeing, nor our ear filled with hearing, how much less is our Mind satiated with the Pleasures of speculating and observing that immense Variety of Objects subject to its View?

Ecclef. 1. 8.

The Exercise of our Mind in rational Discursiveness, about things in quest of Truth; canvassing Questions, examining Arguments for and against; how greatly doth it better us, fortifying our Natural Parts, enabling us to fix our Thoughts on Objects without roving, enuring us to weigh and resolve, and judge well about Matters proposed; preserving us from being easily abused by capricious Fallacies, gull'd by specious Pretences, tossed about with every Doubt or Objection started before us?

Invention of any kind (in discerning the Causes of abstruse Effects, in resolving hard Problems, in demonstrating Theorems, in framing Composures of witty Description, or forcible Perswasion) how much doth it exceed the Pleasure of hunting for any Game, or of combating for any Victory? Do any Man's Children so much please him, as these Creatures of his Brain?

The reading of Books what is it, but conversing with the wisest Men of all Ages and all Countries, who thereby communicate to us their most deliberate Thoughts, choicest Notions, and best Inventions, couched in good Expression, and digested in exact Method?

And as to the particular Matters or Objects of Study, all have their Use and Pleasure: I shall only touch them.

The very initial Studies of *Tongues* and *Grammatical* Literature are very profitable and necessary, as the Inlets to Knowledge, whereby we are enabled to understand wise Men speaking their Sense in their own Terms and lively Strain, whereby especially we are assisted to drink sacred Knowledge out of the Fountains, the Divine Oracles.

Luther would not part with a little *Hebrew* he had for all the *Turkish* Empire.

*Rhetorick*, or the Part of conveying our Thoughts to others by Speech with Advantages of Clearness, Force and Elegancy, so as to instruct, to persuade, to delight the Auditors; of how great Benefit is it, if it be well used? How much may it conduce to the Service of God, and Edification of Men? What hath been a more effectual Instrument of doing good, and working Wonders not only in the World, but in the Church? How many Souls have been converted from Error, Vanity and Vice, to Truth, Soberness and Vertue, by an Eloquent *Apollos*, a *Basil*, a *Chrysostome*?

<sup>Ἄνθρωπος λόγιος</sup>  
<sup>καὶ δυνατός</sup>  
Acts 18. 24.

The Perusal of *History*, how pleasant Illumination of Mind, how useful Direction of Life? How sprightly Incentives to Vertue doth it afford? How doth it supply the room of Experience, and furnish us with Prudence at the Expence of others,



others, informing us about the ways of Action, and the Consequences thereof by Examples, without our own Danger or Trouble? How may it instruct and encourage us in Piety, while therein we trace the Paths of God in Men, or observe the Methods of Divine Providence, how the Lord and Judge of the World in due season protecteth, prospereth, blesteth, rewardeth Innocence and Integrity? How he crosseth, defeateth, blasteth, curseth, punisheth Iniquity and Outrage; managing things with admirable Temper of Wisdom to the Good of Mankind, and Advancement of his own Glory?

The *Mathematical Sciences*, how pleasant is the Speculation of them to the Mind? How useful is the Practice to common Life? How do they whet and excite the Mind? How do they inure it to strict Reasoning, and patient Meditation?

*Natural Philosophy*, the Contemplation of this great Theatre, or visible System presented before us; observing the various Appearances therein, and inquiring into their Causes; reflecting on the Order, Connexion and Harmony of Things; considering their original Source, and their final Design: How doth it enlarge our Minds, and advance them above vulgar Amusements, and the Admiration of those petty Things, about which Men cark and bicker? How may it serve to work in us pious Affections of Admiration, Reverence and Love toward our great Creator, whose eternal Divinity is clearly seen, whose glory is declared, whose transcendent Perfections and Attributes of immense Power, Wisdom and Goodness are conspicuously displayed, whose particular Kindness toward us Men doth evidently shine in those his Works of Nature?

Rom. i. 20.  
Psal. 19. 1.  
Psal. 8.

The Study of *Moral Philosophy*, how exceedingly beneficial may it be to us, suggesting to us the Dictates of Reason, concerning the Nature and Faculties of our Soul, the chief Good and End of our Life, the Way and Means of attaining Happiness, the best Rules and Methods of Practice; the Distinctions between Good and Evil, the Nature of each Vertue, and Motives to embrace it; the Rank wherein we stand in the World, and the Duties proper to our Relations; by rightly understanding and estimating which things we may know how to behave our selves decently and soberly toward our selves, justly and prudently toward our Neighbours; we may learn to correct our Inclinations, to regulate our Appetites, to moderate our Passions, to govern our Actions, to conduct and wield all our Practice well in Prosecution of our End; so as to enjoy our Being and Conveniencies of Life in constant Quiet and Peace, with Tranquility and Satisfaction of Mind?

But especially the Study of *Theology*, how numberless, unexpressible Advantages doth it yield? For,

It enlighthneth our Minds with the best Knowledge concerning the most high and worthy Objects in order to the most happy End, with the firmest Assurance.

It certainly and perfectly doth inform us concerning the Nature and Attributes, the Will and Intentions, the Works and Providence of God.

It fully declareth to us our own Nature, our Original, our design'd End, our whole Duty, our certain Way of attaining eternal Life and Felicity.

It exactly teacheth us how we should demean our selves in all respects piously toward God, justly and charitably toward our Neighbour, soberly toward our selves; without Blame in the World, with Satisfaction of our Conscience, with assured Hope of blessed Rewards.

It proposeth those Encouragements, and exhibiteth Assurances of those Helps, which serve potently to engage us in all good Practice.

It setteth before us a most compleat and lively Pattern of all Goodness; apt most clearly to direct, most strongly to excite, most obligingly to engage us thereto; especially instructing and inclining to the Practice of the most high and hard Duties, Meekness, Humility, Patience, Self-denial, Contempt of all worldly Vanities.

It discovereth those sublime Mysteries and stupendous Wonders of Grace, whereby God hath demonstrated an Incomprehensible Kindness to Mankind, and our Obligation to correspondent Gratitude.

1 Pet. 1. 12.  
Tit. 3. 4.

It representeth manifold Arguments and Incentives to love God with most intense Affection, to confide in him with most firm Assurance, to delight in him continually with joy unspeakable; which are the noblest, the sweetest, the happiest Operations of our Soul.

It



1 Cor. 4. 8. It reareth our Hearts from vain Thoughts, and mean Desires concerning these poor, transitory, earthly things, to Contemplations, Affections, and Hopes toward Objects most excellent, eternal and celestial.

It engageth us to study the Book of God, the Book of Books, the richest Mine of most excellent Knowledge, containing infallible Oracles of Truth, and heavenly Rules of Life; which are able to make us wise to salvation, and perfect to every good work.

2 Tim. 3. 15. good work.

And how can we otherwise be so well employ'd, as in Meditation about such things? What Occupation doth nearer approach to that of the blessed Angels? What Heaven is there upon Earth like to that of constantly feasting our Minds and Hearts in the Contemplation of such Objects? Especially considering that this Study doth not only yield private Benefit to our selves in forwarding our own Salvation; but enableth us by our Guidance and Encouragement to promote the eternal Welfare of others, and by our Endeavours to people Heaven, according to that

1 Tim. 4. 16. Exhortation of St. Paul pressing on Timothy this Study with Diligence; *Meditate upon these things; give thy self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all; take heed unto thy self, and unto the Doctrine, continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thy self, and them that hear thee.*

So considerable is each Part of Learning, so extremely profitable are some Parts of it: Indeed the Skill of any liberal Art is valuable, as a handsome Ornament, as a harmless Divertisement, as an useful Instrument upon Occasions; as preferable to all other Accomplishments and Advantages of Person or Fortune (Beauty, Strength, Wealth, Power or the like;) for who would not purchase any kind of such Knowledge at any Rate; who would sell it for any Price; who would not chuse rather to be deformed or impotent in his Body, than to have a misshapen and weak Mind; to have rather a lank Purse than an empty Brain; to have no Title at all, than no Worth to bear it out? If any would, he is not of Solomon's Mind; for of Wisdom (by which he meaneth a Comprehension of all Knowledge, Divine and Human; into which the Knowledge of Natural things, of Mathematicks, of Poetry, are reckon'd Ingredients) he saith, *The merchandize of it is better than the merchandize of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold; she is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire, are not to be compared unto her: Her fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and her revenue than choice silver.*

1 Kings 4. 29—

Prov. 2. 14.

8. 11.

Prov. 8. 19.

16. 16. 20. 15.

4. 7.

Now then, considering all these Advantages of our Calling, if we by our Negligence or Sluggishness therein do lose them, are we not very ingrateful to God who gave them, as with a gracious Intent for our Good, so with Expectation that we should improve them to his Service? If God had allotted to us the Calling of Rusticks, or of Artificers, we had been impious in not diligently following it, but we are abominably ingrateful in neglecting this most incomparably excellent Vocation.

Are we not extremely defective to our selves, if, indulging a wretched Humour of Laziness, we will not enjoy those sweet Pleasures, nor embrace those great Profits to which God in Mercy calleth us?

Prov. 19. 8. If Solomon said true, *He that getteth wisdom, loveth his own soul, he that keepeth understanding shall find good;* how little Friends are we to our selves, how neglectful of our own Welfare, by not using the Means of getting Wisdom?

Prov. 15. 14. *The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge, saith Solomon; what a Fool then is he that shunneth it? Who, though it be his way and his special Duty to seek it, yet neglecteth it; chusing rather to do nothing, or to do worse.*

And do we not deserve great Blame, Displeasure and Disgrace from Mankind, if, having such Opportunities of qualifying our selves to do Good, and serve the Publick, we by our Idleness render our selves worthless and useless?

How, being slothful in our Business, can we answer for our violating the Wills, for abusing the Goodness, for perverting the Charity and Bounty of our worthy Founders and Benefactors, who gave us the good things we enjoy, not to maintain us in Idleness, but for Supports and Encouragements of our Industry? How can we excuse our selves from Dishonesty and perfidious Dealing, seeing that we are admitted to these Enjoyments under Condition, and upon Confidence (confirmed by our free Promises and most solemn Engagements) of using them according to their



their pious Intent, that is in a diligent Prosecution of our Studies, in order to the Service of God, and of the Publick?

Let every Scholar, when he mispendeth an Hour, or sluggeth on his Bed, but imagine that he heareth the Voice of those glorious Kings or venerable Prelates, or worthy Gentlemen complaining thus, and rating him; Why, Sluggard, dost thou against my Will possess my Estate? Why dost thou presume to occupy the Place due to an industrious Person? Why dost thou forget or despise thy Obligation to my Kindness? Thou art an Usurper, a Robber, or a Purloiner of my Goods, which I never intended for such as thee; I challenge thee of Wrong to my self, and of Sacrilege toward my God, to whose Service I devoted those his Gifts to me.

How reproachful will it be to us, if that Expostulation may concern us, *Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?* Prov. 17. 16.

If to be a Dunce or a Bungler in any Profession be shameful, how much more ignominious and infamous to a Scholar to be such? From whom all Men expect, that he should excel in intellectual Abilities; and be able to help others by his Instruction and Advice.

Nothing surely would more grate on the Heart of one that hath a Spark of Ingenuity, of Modesty, of generous good Nature, than to be liable to such an Imputation.

To avoid it therefore (together with all the Guilt, and all the Mischiefs attending on Sloth) let each of us in God's Name, carefully mind his Business: And let the Grace and Blessing of God prosper you therein. *Amen.*

## SERMON XXIII.

### The Unsearchableness of GOD'S JUDGMENTS.

ROM. XI. 33.

*How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his ways past finding out!*

**T**HESE Words are the Close of a Disputation, wherein St. Paul was engaged with the Advocates of *Judaism*, concerning God's Providence toward his ancient People, in rejecting the greatest Part of them upon their Refusal to embrace the *Christian* Doctrine; and in admitting the *Gentile* World to favour, upon its Compliance with the Overtures thereof proposed in the *Gospel*. In this Proceeding those *Infidels* could not discern God's Hand, nor would allow such a Dispensation worthy of him, advancing several Exceptions against it: God (said they) having espoused and consecrated us to himself; having to our Fathers, in regard to their Piety, made so absolute Promises of Benediction on their Posterity; having consequently endowed us with such Privileges and choice Pledges of his Favour, having taken so much Pains with us, and performed so great things in our Behalf; having so long avowed, supported, and cherished us; how can it well consist with his Wisdom, with his Justice, with his Fidelity, with his Constancy thus instantly to abandon and repudiate us? Doth not this Dealing argue his former Affections to have been mis-placed? Doth it not implead his ancient Covenant and Law of Imperfection? Doth it not supplant his own Designs, and unravel all that he for many Ages hath been doing? Upon such Accounts did this Dispensation appear very strange and scandalous to them: But

St.



St. Paul being infallibly assured of its Truth, doth undertake to vindicate it from all Misprisions, rendering a fair Account of it, and assigning for it many satisfactory Reasons, drawn from the general Equity of the Case, from the Nature of God, his Attributes, and his Relations to Men; from the Congruity of this Proceeding to the Tenour of God's Providence, to his most ancient Purposes, to the true Intent of his Promises, to his express Declarations and Predictions; to the State of things in the World, and the pressing Needs of all Mankind: Such Reasons (I say, which I have not time more explicitly to relate) doth the Apostle produce in favour of this great Dispensation; the which did suffice to clear and justify it from all their Objections; yet notwithstanding after that he had steered his Discourse through all these Rocks, he thought it safe to cast Anchor; winding up the Contest in this modest Intimation, that whatever he could say, might not perhaps exhaust the Difficulty, or void all Scruple; that therefore in this and in all such Cases, for entire Satisfaction, we should have Recourse to the incomprehensible Wisdom of God, who frequently in the course of his Providence doth act upon Grounds, and ordereth things in Methods transcending our Ability to discover or trace: To consider some Causes and Reasons of which Incomprehensibility, and to ground thereon some practical Advices, will be the Scope of my Discourse: The Reasons may be, these;

1. As the Dealings of very wise Men sometimes are founded upon Maxims, and admit Justifications not obvious, nor penetrable by vulgar Conceit; so may God act according to Rules of Wisdom and Justice; which it may be quite impossible by our Faculties to apprehend, or with our Means to descry.

As there are natural Modes of Being and Operation (such as God's necessary Subsistence, his Production of Things from Nothing, his Eternity without Succession, his Immenity without Extention, his Prescience without Necessitation of Events, his ever acting, but never changing; and the like) so there may be prudential and moral Rules of proceeding far above our Reach, so God himself telleth us: *As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* Some of them we may be incapable to know, because of our finite Nature; they being peculiar Objects of Divine Wisdom, and not to be understood by any Creature: For as God cannot impart the Power of doing all things possible, so may he not communicate the Faculty of knowing all things intelligible; that being indeed to ungod himself, or to deprive himself of his peerless Supremacy in Wisdom; hence is he stiled *the only wise God*; hence is he said to *dwell in light inaccessible*; hence he *chargeth the Angels with folly*; hence the most illuminate Seraphims do veil their Faces before him.

Other such Rules we may not be able to perceive from the Meanness of our Nature, or our low Rank among Creatures; for beneath Omniscience there being innumerable Forms of Intelligence, in the lowest of these we sit, one Remove from Beasts; being endowed with Capacities suitable to that inferiour Station, and to those meaner Employments, for which we were designed and framed; whence our Mind hath a Pitch, beyond which it cannot soar; and things clearly intelligible to more noble Creatures, moving in a higher Orb, may be dark and unexplicable to us: *As an Angel of God, so is my Lord the King, to discern good and bad,* was an Expression importing this Difference, how those glorious Creatures do overtop us in intellectual Capacities.

Also divers Notions not simply passing our Capacity to know, we are not yet in Condition to ken, by reason of our Circumstances here, in this dark Corner of things, to which we are confined, and wherein we lie under many Disadvantages of attaining Knowledge: He that is shut up in a close Place, and can only peep through Chinks, who standeth in a Valley, and hath his Prospect intercepted, who is encompassed with Fogs, who hath but a dusky Light to view things by, whose Eyes are weak or foul, how can he see much or far, how can he discern things remote, minute or subtile, clearly and distinctly? Such is our Case; our Mind is pent up in the Body, and looketh only through those Clefs by which Objects strike our Sense; its Intuition is limited within a very small Compass; it resideth in an Atmosphere of Fancy, rust with Exhalations from Temper, Appetite, Passion, Interest; its Light is scant and feint (for Sense and Experience do reach only some few gross Matters of Fact, Light infused, and Revelation imparted to us, proceed from arbitrary Dispensation, in definite Measures) our Ratiocination con-



consequently from such Principles, must be very short and defective; nor are our Minds ever thoroughly sound; or pure and defecate from Prejudices; Hence no Wonder, that now we are wholly ignorant of divers great Truths, or have but a glimmering Notion of them, which we may, and hereafter shall come fully and clearly to understand; so that even the Apostles, the Secretaries of Heaven might say, *We know in part, and we prophesie in part; We now see through a glass darkly, but* 1 Cor. 13. 9; *then face to face.* 12.

In fine, those Rules of Equity or Experience, which we in our Transactions with one another do use (being derived from our Original Inclinations to like some good things, or from Notions stamped on our Soul when God made us according to his Image, from common Experience, from any kind of rational Collection, from the Prescription of God's Word) if they be applied to the Dealings of God will be found very incongruous, or deficient; the Case being vastly altered from that infinite Distance in Nature and State between God and us; and from the immense Differences which his Relations toward us have from our Relations to one another.

Wherefore in divers Enquiries about Providence, to which our Curiosity will stretch it, it is impossible for us to be resolved, and launching into them, we shall soon get out of our Depth, so as to swim in Dissatisfaction, or to sink into Distrust: Why God made the World at such an Instant, no sooner or later; why he made it thus, not exempt from all Disorder; why he framed Man (the Prince of visible Creatures) so fallible and frail; so prone to Sin, so liable to Misery; why so many things happen offensive to him, why his Gifts are distributed with such Inequality? Such Questions we are apt to propound and to debate; but the Resolution of them our Mind perhaps was not made to apprehend, nor in its most elevate Condition shall attain it; however in this State we by no means can come at it; it at least being kept close from us among those things, of which it is said, *The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, in distinction from others, about which* Deut. 29. 30; *it is added, But those that are revealed, belong unto us and to our children for ever.*

In such Cases the absolute Will, the Sovereign Authority, the pure Liberality of God do supply the Place of Reasons; sufficient, if not to satisfy the Minds of Men fondly curious, yet to stop the Mouths of those, who are boldly peremptory: The which are alledged, not with intent to imply that God ever acteth unaccountably, or without highest Reason, but that sometimes his Methods of acting are not fit Subjects of our Conception or Discussion; for otherwhile God appealeth to the Verdict of our Reason; when the Case is such that we can apprehend it, and the Apprehension of it may conduce to good Purposes.

2. As the standing Rules of God's acting, so the occasional Grounds thereof are commonly placed beyond the Sphere of our Apprehension.

God is obliged to prosecute his own immutable Decrees; *working all things,* as Eph. 1. 11; *the Apostle saith, according to the counsel of his own will;* which how can we any-wise come to discover? Can we climb up above the Heaven of Heavens, and there unlock his Closet, rifle his Cabinet, and peruse the Records of everlasting Destiny, by which the World is governed? No, *Who knoweth his mind, or hath been his counsellor?* *Who, saith the Prophet, hath stood in the counsel of the Lord; or hath perceived and heard his word?* Rom. 11. 34. Isa. 40. 13. Jer. 23. 18. Sap. 9. 13.

He doth search the hearts, and try the reins of men; he doth \* weigh their spirits, and their works; he doth know their Frame, he doth understand their thoughts afar off; he perceiveth their closest Intentions, their deepest Contrivances, their most retired Behaviours; he consequently is acquainted with their true Qualifications, Capacities and Merits; unto which he most justly and wisely doth accommodate his Dealings with them; the which therefore must often thwart the Opinions and Expectations of us, who are ignorant of those Particulars, and can only view the exterior Face or Semblance of things: For (as Samuel, in the case of preferring David before his Brethren, did say) *God seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh at the outward appearance, but Good looketh on the heart.* 1 Sam. 16. 7.

God also hath a perfect Foresight of contingent Events; he seeth upon what Pin each Wheel moveth, and with what Weight every Scale will be turned; he discerneth all the Connections, all the Entanglements of things, and what the Result will

\* Prov. 16. 2. Isa. 26. 7.  
1 Sam. 2. 3. Psal. 103. 14. 139.  
2. 64. 6.  
Job 14. 16.  
Ἡμεῖς μὴ δὲ μόνα ὁρῶμεν τὰ πνευματικά· ὁ δὲ τῶν ὀλῶν Θεὸς, ὃς τῶν ταῦτα δρῶντων ἐπιστάται τὸ σκοπεῖν, καὶ τὰς μάλας, καὶ τοὺς ἐργοὺς διὰ τῶν ἐν ἡμῶν ἐκτελεῖ. Theod. Ep. 3.



will be upon the Combination, or the Clashing of numberless Causes; in Correspondence to which Perceptions he doth order things consistently and conveniently, whereas we being stark-blind, or very dim-sighted in such respects (seeing nothing future, and but few things present) cannot apprehend what is fit and feasible; or why that is done, which appeareth done to us.

God observeth in what relations, and what degrees of Comparison (as to their Natures, their Vertues, their Consequences) all things do stand, each toward others; so poising them in the Balance of right Judgment, as exactly to distinguish their just Weight and Worth; whereas we cannot tell what things to compare, we know not how to put them into the Scale, we are unapt to make due Allowances, we are unable to discern which side doth overweigh: In the immense Variety of Objects our Knowledge doth extend to few things eligible, nor among them can we pick out the best Competitors for our Choice: Hence often must we be at great Losses in scanning the Designs, or tracing the Footsteps of Providence.

3. We are also incapable thoroughly to discern the Ways of Providence from our moral Defects, in some measure common to all Men; from our Stupidity, our Sloth, our Temerity, our Impatience, our Impurity of Heart, our Perverseness of Will and Affections: We have not the Perspicacity to espy the subtle Tracts, and secret Reserves of Divine Wisdom; we have not the Industry, with steady Application of Mind, to regard and meditate on God's Works; we have not the Temper and Patience to wait upon God, until he discover himself in the Accomplishment of his Purposes; we have not that *blessed purity of heart*, which is requisite to the *seeing God* in his special Dispensations, we have not that Rectitude of Will and Government of our Passions, as not to be scandalized at what God doeth, if it thwarteth our Conceit or Humour; such Defects are observable in the best Men; who therefore have misapprehended, have disrelished, have fretted and murmured at the Proceedings of God; we might instance in *Job*, in *David*, in *Elias*, in *Jonah*, in the holy *Apostles* themselves, by whose Speeches and Deportments in some Cases, it may appear how difficult it is for us, who have *eyes of flesh* (as *Job* speaketh) and Hearts too never quite freed of Carnality, to see through, or fully to acquiesce in the Dealings of God.

It is indeed a Distemper incident to us, which we can hardly shun, or cure, that we are apt to measure the Equity and Expedience of things according to our Opinions and Passions; affecting consequently to impose on God our silly Imaginations as Rules of his Proceeding, and to constitute him the Executioner of our sorry Passions; what we conceit fit to be done, that we take God bound to perform; when we feel our selves stirred, then we presume God must be alike concerned: To our Apprehensions every slight Inconvenience is a huge Calamity, every Scratch of Fortune is a ghastly Wound; God therefore; we think, should have prevented it, or must presently remove it; every pitiful Bauble, every trivial Accommodation is a Matter of high Consequence, which if God withhold, we are ready to clamour on him; and wail as Children for want of a Trifle. Are we soundly angry or enflamed with Zeal? Then *fire must come down from heaven*, then Thunder-bolts must fly about, then nothing but sudden Woe and Vengeance are denounced: Are we pleased? Then Showers of Blessings must descend on the Heads; then Floods of Wealth must run into the Laps of our Favourites, otherwise we are not satisfied; and scarce can deem God awake, or mindful of his Charge. We do beyond Measure hate or despise some Persons, and to those God must not afford any Favour, any Mercy, any Forbearance, or time of Repentance; we excessively admire or dote on others, and those God must not touch or cross; if he doth not proceed thus, he is in danger to forfeit his Authority: He must hardly be allowed to govern the World, in case he will not square his Administrations to our fond Conceit, or forward Humour: Hence no wonder, that Men often are stumbled about Providence; For God will not rule according to their Fancy or Pleasure (it would be a mad World if he should) neither indeed could he do so if he would, their Judgments and their Desires being infinitely various, inconsistent and repugnant. Again,

4. The Nature of those Instruments which Divine Providence doth use in the Administration of Human Affairs, hindereth us from discerning it: It is an

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Observation among *Philosophers*, that the Footsteps of divine Wisdom are, to Exclusion of doubt, far more conspicuous in the Works of Nature, than in the Management of our Affairs; so that some who by Contemplation of natural Appearances were convinced of God's Existence and his Protection of the World (who thence could not doubt but that an immense Wisdom had erected the beautiful Frame of Heaven and Earth, had ranged the Stars in their Order and Courses; had formed the Bodies and Souls of *Animals*, had provided for the Subsistence and Propagation of each *Species*, had settled and doth uphold the visible World in its so comely and convenient State, that even such Men) reflecting on the Course of Human Transactions, have staggered into Distrust, whether a Divine Wisdom doth sit at the Helm of our Affairs; many thence hardly would admit God to be concerned in them, but supposed him to commit their Conduct to a fatal Swinge, or a casual Fluctuation of obvious Causes: One great Reason of this Difference may be, that whereas the Instruments of Divine Power in Nature, are in themselves merely passive, or act only as they are acted by pure Necessity (as a Pen in Writing or a Hammer in striking) being thence determinate, uniform, constant and certain in their Operation; whenever there any Footsteps of Counsel, any Tendency to an End, and Deviation from the common Tracks of Motion do appear, such Effects cannot reasonably be imputed merely to natural Causes, but to a superiour Wisdom, wielding them in such a manner, and steering them to such a Mark: But the visible Engines of Providence in our Affairs are self-moving Agents, working with Knowledge and Choice; the which, as in themselves they are indeterminate, irregular and uncertain, so they are capable to be diversified in numberless unaccountable Ways according to various Representations of Objects, or by Influence of divers Principles inclining to judge and chuse differently: Temper, Humour, Passion, Prejudice, Custom, Example, together with Contingencies of Occasion (depending on like Principles in adjacent free Causes) do move singly or combinedly, in Ways so implicate, to the various Production of so various Events, that nothing hardly can fall out, which may not with some plausible Colour of Reason be derived from some one of those Sources, or from a Complication of them: Nothing can appear so uncouth or extravagant, which may not be fathered on some Fetch of Wit, or some Hit of Fancy, or Capricio of Humour, or some Transport of Passion, or some lucky Advantage, or on divers of those conspiring; whence in accounting for the Reason of such Events, Men deem they may leave out Providence as superfluous; especially considering, that usually Disorders and Defects, only imputable to Man's Will, do accompany and further such Events.

For Instance, what other Cause would many think needful to assign for the Conveyance of *Joseph* into *Egypt*, than the Envy of his Brethren; for *Shimei's* reviling *David*, than his base Malignity; for *David's* numbering the People, than his wanton Pride; for *Jeroboam's* Revolt, than his unruly Ambition; for *Job's* being robb'd, than the thievish Disposition of the *Arabs*; for his being diseased, than a Redundance of bad Humours; for our *Lord's* Suffering, than the spiteful Rage of the *Jewish* Rulers and People; together with the treacherous Avarice of *Judas*, and the corrupt Easiness of *Pilate*? These Events all of them are ascribed to God's Hand, and special Ordination; but Men could not see or avow it in them; what need, will Men ever say, in such Cases to introduce God's Aid, when human Means suffice to atchieve the Feat?

5. Indeed, as in Nature, the Influences of Heaven, and of inferiour Causes so commonly in the Production of these Events, divine and human Agency are so knit and twisted one with the other, that it is not easie to discriminate them, so as to sever the Bounds of common and special Providence; or to discern what God performeth by natural Instruments, what by superiour Efficacy; when the Balance turneth from our Inclinations, when it is cast from a Grain thrown in by divine Interposition; the Management of these Affairs being a Consort, wherein God's Wisdom beareth one Part, Man's Free-will playeth another; Fortune and Occasion also do strike in, we not seeing the first, are prone to ascribe all the Harmony to the last, which are most obvious and visible.

*Nam cum dispositi quasssem fadera  
mundi,  
Prescriptoque mari fines  
—tunc omnia rebar  
Consilio firmata Dei  
Sed cum res hominum tanta caligine  
volvii  
Adspicerem  
—rursus labefacta cadebat  
Religio, &c.*

*Claud. in Ruff. 1.  
Diod. Sic. lib. 15. p. 482.*

*Θεός μὴ πάντα, ὡς μὴ Θεὸς τύχη καὶ  
καίτοι τα ἀνθρώπινα καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν  
τα. Max. Tyr. diss. 3. & Plat.*



6. The more apt are we to do thus, because the manner of Divine Efficacy is ever very soft and gentle : God disposeth Things *fortiter & suaviter* ; so as effectually to perform what he designeth, but in the most sweet and easie way : His Providence doth not hurry along like an impetuous rumbling Torrent, but glideth on as a smooth and still Current, with an irresistable, but imperceptible Force carrying things down therewith : Without much ado, without any Clatter, by a Nod of his Head, by a Whisper of his Mouth, by a Turn of his Hand, he doth effect his Purposes : Winding up a close Spring, he setteth the greatest Wheels in Motion ; and thrusting in an insensible Spoke, he stoppeth the greatest Wheels in their Career ; injecting a Thought, exciting an Humour, presenting an Occasion, insinuating a petty Accident, he bringeth about the most notable Events. He doth so *fashion the hearts of men*, so *manage their hands*, so *guide their steps*, that they who are acted by him cannot feel the least Touch upon them. For, *The King's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of waters, he turneth it wheresoever he will* ; that is, by secret Pipes, by obscure Channels God conveyeth the Minds and Wills of greatest Persons (the chief Engines of his Providence) unto such Points of Resolution as he pleaseth, so that they seem to flow thither of their own accord, without any exterior Direction or Impulse : Hence do his most effectual Operations slip by us without making Impression on our Minds, which are wont to apprehend things, as with a gross Palpability they do incur the Senses, so that the Preacher, comparing the Methods of Providence with the most occult Proceedings in Nature, might well say, *As thou knowest not the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child, so thou knowest not the works of God, who maketh all.* Again,

7. God in his Progress toward the Atchievement of any Design, is not wont to go in the most direct and compendious ways, but commonly windeth about, and taketh a large compass, enfoldng several other co-incident Purposes, some whereof may be no less considerable, than is that, which we deem most necessary, and affect to see dispatched ; but this Course seemeth tedious to us, who have not the Wit to perceive that Complexion of Ends, nor the Temper to wait for the Completion of them. If God, when we seem to need, doth not instantly appear in our Favour and Succour, if he doth not presently vindicate Truth and Right ; if he doth not nip wicked Designs in the Bud, and repress the first Onsets of outrageous Violence ; if for a while he suffereth the *tabernacles of robbers to prosper*, and *iniquity to lift up its horn* ; then he is in a Slumber, quite unmindful or insensible of us ; then he turneth aside his Face, or doth behold what passeth, as an unconcerned Spectator ; then he standeth aloof, unready to help us ; then doth he hold off his Hand, not meddling in our Affairs ; in such Cases we are apt to cry out, *Estis ubi ? O superi ! How long, O Lord, wilt thou forget ; how long wilt thou hide thy face ? Lord, how long wilt thou look on ? Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord ? why standest thou afar off ? why withdrawest thou thy hand ? pluck it out of thy bosom : Return, O Lord, how long ?* Such are our Prayers, such our Expostulations ; so is our blind Impatience prone to muse and mutter ;

not considering how many good Designs God is carrying on in a calm and steady Pace, by well measured Steps, all which, in due season, when they are ripe for Accomplishment, shall undoubtedly be effected ; for, *The Lord, as St. Peter saith, is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering toward all men*, that is, he certainly will express his faithful Benignity toward good Men, yet so as also to extend his merciful Patience toward others ; he so will tender the Interests of some, as concurrently to procure the Welfare of all, and accordingly will time his Proceedings, allowing the Leisure and Opportunities requisite thereto : He can, although we cannot, *wait to be gracious* ; for as in him there are no Passions to precipitate Action, so to him there are no sensible Differences of time, *One day being with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

8. Again, God (as is the Property of every wise Agent) is wont to act variously, according to the State and Circumstances of things, or to the Dispositions and Capacities of Persons ; so as to do the same thing for different Ends, and different things for the same End ; to apply one Instrument to several Uses, and by several

Sap. 8. 1. 10.  
pulsos & XCV  
506.

Des. tim. 12.  
Balmort & 15  
vry d. 13. 10. 100.

Psal. 33. 15. Isai. 41. 13. 42. 6.  
Prov. 16. 9. 20. 24. Jer. 10. 23.  
Job. 33. 14. 23. 8.

Prov. 21. 1.

Eccles. 11. 5.

Sil. Ital.

Psal. 13. 1. 89. 46. 90. 13. 74. 10.  
44. 24. 55. 1. 94. 3. 35. 17.  
Psal. 35. 17. Psal. 44. 23. 35. 23. 7. 6.  
Psal. 74. 11. Psal. 10. 1.  
Psal. 90. 13. 6. 4. 7. 7. 80. 14.  
Psal. 22. 1. 11. 19. 38. 2. 71. 12.  
Vid. Hab. 1. 2.

(Jer. 23. 20.)  
2Pet. 3. 9, 10.

Isa. 30. 18.



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several Instruments to work out one Purpose : So he afflicteth good Men out of Love, for Trial and Improvement of their Vertues, bad Men in Displeasure, to illustrate his Power and Justice on them ; he encourageth and blesteth the one, he punisheth and curseth the other with Prosperity ; he reclaimeth both from Error and Sin by either of those Methods, as their Temper and their Circumstances do require : Whence it is very difficult for us ever from the kind of Accidents befalling Men to divine how far God is concerned in them, or to what particular Scope they are aimed ; so that well might the Preacher, upon a careful Observation of such Occurrences, establish this Rule, *No man knoweth love, or hatred (that is, the special Regard of God toward Men) by all that is before them ; because, All things come alike to all, there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.* Farther,

Ecc. 9. 1, 2;

9. There are different Ends which Providence in various Order and Measure doth pursue, which we, by reason of our dim Insight and short Prospect cannot descry : God, as the Universal and perpetual Governour of the World, in his Dispensation of things, respecteth not only the Good of this or that Person, of one Nation or one Age ; but often in some degree waving that, or taking care for it in a less remarkable Way, hath a provident Regard to the more extensive Good of a whole People, of the World, of Posterity ; as he did order his Friend *Abraham* to wander in a strange Land, for the Benefit of his Seed ; *Joseph* to be sold, calumniated, and fettered for the Preservation of his Family ; our Lord to suffer those grievous things for the Redemption of Mankind ; the *Jews* to be rejected for the Salvation of the *Gentiles* : In such Cases pur-blind Men, observing Events to cross particular and present Ends, but not being aware how conducive they may prove to general, remote, and more important Designs, can hardly be satisfied how God should be concerned in them ; the present, or that which lieth adjacent just under our Nose, is all that we can or will consider ; and therefore must be ill Judges of what is done by all-provident Wisdom.

Hab. 3. 6.

10. Again, God permitteth things, bad in their own Nature, with regard to their Instrumental Use and Tendency ; for that often the worst things may be ordinable to the best Ends ; things very bitter may work pleasant Effects ; upon the wildest Stock divine Husbandry can ingraft most excellent Fruit ; Sin really, and Suffering reputedly, are the worst Evils, yet from them much Glory to God, and great Benefit to Men do accrue ; even from the most wicked Act that ever was committed, from the most lamentable Event that ever did happen, Fruits admirably glorious, and immensely beneficial did spring ; yet usually so blind are we as to be offended at such Things, and from them to raise Exceptions against Providence.

11. Also the Expediency of things to be permitted or crossed, doth frequently consist, not in themselves singly taken, as particular Acts or Events, but in their Conjunction, or Reference to others, with which they may become subservient toward a common End ; so that divers things in themselves extremely bad, may by Combination or Collision engender good Effects ; and thence prove fit Weapons or Tools of Providence ; as the most deadly Poisons may be so mixed, that curbing one another's Force, they may constitute a harmless Mass, sometimes a wholesome Medicine ; but we poring on the simple Ingredients, and not considering how they may be tempered, or how applied by a skilful Hand, can hardly deem the Toleration of them congruous to Wisdom. Farther,

12. That Providence sometimes is obscure and intricate, may be attributed to the Will of God, upon divers good Accounts designing it to be such : *Verily (saith the Prophet) thou art a God that hidest thy self, O God of Israel the Saviour.*

Is. 45. 15.  
Psal. 89. 46.

God commonly doth not intend to exert his Hand notoriously ; for that whereas every special Interposition of his Hand is in effect a Miracle (surmounting the natural Power, or thwarting the ordinary Course of inferiour Causes) it doth not become him to prostitute his miraculous Power, or to exert it otherwise than upon singular Occasions, and for most weighty Causes : 'tis not conformable to the Tenour of his Administrations to convince Men against their Will, or by irresistible Evidence to wring Persuasion from stubborn or stupid Minds ; but to exercise the Wisdom, and to prove the Ingenuity of well-disposed Persons, who upon competent Intimations, shall be capable to spell out, and forward to approve his Proceedings.

13. He will not glare forth in Discoveries so bright as to dazzle, to confound our weak Sight ; therefore he veileth his Face with a Cloud, and wrappeth his Power



Hab. 3. 4.  
Psal. 97. 2.  
18. 11.

Power in some Obscurity; therefore clouds and darkness are round about him; he maketh darkness his secret place; his Pavilion round about him is dark waters and thick clouds of the sky.

14. He meaneth thereby to improve and exalt our Faith, being the less seen, that he may be the more believed; Faith never rising higher than when it doth soar to Objects beyond our Sight; when we can approve God's Wisdom and Justice in Occurrences surmounting our Conceit; when we can rely upon God's Word and Help, although the Stream of his Proceedings seemeth to cross our Hopes.

15. It is fit also that God many times designedly should act in Ways surpassing our Apprehension, and apt to baffle and puzzle our Reason, that he may appear God indeed, infinitely transcending us in Perfection of Wisdom and Justice; or that we comprehending the Reason of his Actings, may not imagine our Wisdom

*Quod videri communiter, quod comprehendendi, quod aestimari potest, minus est oculis quibus occupatur, & manibus quibus contaminatur, & sensibus quibus invenitur. Tert. Apol. 17.*

*Hoc est quod Deum aestimari facit, dum aestimari non capit. Tert. 16.*

comparable, our Justice commensurate to his; yea, that we in those respects do exceed him; for That (as Tertullian discourseth) which may be seen, is less than the eyes that survey it; that which may be comprehended, is less than the hands that grasp it; that which may be valued, is less than the senses which rate it; It is God's being inestimable that makes him worthily esteemed; his being incomprehensible rendreth him adorable.

Job 37. 22,  
23, 24.

16. The Obscurity of Providence doth indeed conciliate an awful Reverence toward it; for Darkness naturally raiseth a Dread of invisible Powers; we use to go on tremblingly, when we cannot see far about us; we regard none so much as those, whose Wisdom we find to over-reach ours, and whose Intentions we cannot sound; it was Elihu's Observation, *With God is terrible Majesty, the Almighty we cannot find him out; — men do therefore fear him.*

Psal. 78. 34.

17. It is also requisite, that God should dispose many Occurrences, cross to our vulgar Notions, and offensive to our carnal Sense; that we may thence be prompted to think of God, driven to seek him, engaged to mark him interposing in our Affairs; Men from disorderly and surprizing Accidents preposterously do conceive Doubts about Providence, as if in managing things, nothing odd, or amiss, would occur; whereas if no such Events did start up, they might be proner to question it, they would at least come to forget or neglect it; for if human Transactions passed on as do the Motions of Nature, in a smooth Course, without any Rub or Disturbance, Men commonly would no more think of God than they do, when they behold the Sun rising, the Rivers running, the Sea flowing; they would not depend on his Protection, or have recourse to him for Succour; it is Difficulty and Distress seizing on them, which compel Men to implore God for Relief, which dispose them to see his Hand reaching it forth unto them; according to that in the Psalm; *When he slew them, then they sought him, they returned and enquired early after God, they remembered that God was their rock, and the most high God their Redeemer.* Again,

Chrys. Tom. 7.  
p. 15.

18. It is needful that the present Course of Providence should not be transparently clear and satisfactory, that we may be well assured concerning a future Account, and forced in our Thoughts to recur thither for a Resolution of all such emergent Doubts and Difficulties; for if all Accompts were apparently stated and discharged here; if now Right did ever prevail, and Iniquity were suppressed; if Vertue were duly crowned, and Vice deservedly scourged, who would hope or fear an After-reckoning?

This indeed is the grand Cause, why Providence now doth appear so cloudy, that Men consider not how our Affairs have no compleat Determination, or final Issue here; things now are doing and not done; in a Progress and Tendency toward somewhat beyond, not in a State of Consistence and Perfection; this not being the Place of deciding Causes, or dispensing Rewards; but a State of Probation of Work, of Travel, of Combat, of running for the Prize, of sowing toward the Harvest; a State of Liberty to follow our own Choice, and to lay the ground of our Doom; of falling into Sin, and of rising thence by Repentance; of God's exercising Patience, and exhibiting Mercy: wherefore as we cannot well judge of an artificial Work by its first Draughts, or of a Poem by a few Scenes, but must stay till all be finished or acted through; so we cannot here clearly discern the entire Congruity of providential Dispensations to the Divine Attributes, the



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the *Catastrophe* or utmost Resolution of things is the general Judgment, wherein the deep Wisdom, the exact Justice, the perfect Goodness of God will be displayed to the full Satisfaction or Conviction of all Men; when God's Honour will be thoroughly vindicated, his despised Patience, and his abused Grace will be avenged; every Case will be rightly tried, every Work will be justly recompensed, all Accompts will be set streight; in the mean time divers things must occur, unaccountable to us, looking upon things as they now stand absolutely before us, without Reference to that Day: Considering this may induce us to suspend our Opinion about such Matters, allowing God to go through with his Work before we censure it, not being so quick and precipitate as to forestall his Judgment; and surely would we but observe that reasonable Advice of St. Paul, *Judge nothing before the time until the Lord come*, our chief Doubts would be resolved, our shrewdest Exceptions against Providence would be voided. Rom. 2. 7.  
1 Cor. 4. 5.

These are the chief Reasons of the Point, which Meditation did suggest; upon it (for it is not a Point merely speculative, but pregnant with useful Consequences) divers practical Applications may be grounded, which the time scarcely will allow me to name.

1. It should render us modest and sober in our Judgment about providential Occurrences, not pretending thoroughly to know the Reasons of God's Proceedings, Ecclef. 3. 20.  
Psal. 131. 1. or to define the Consequences of them; for it is plainly fond Arrogance or profane Imposture to assume perfect Skill in that which passeth our Capacity to learn.
2. It should make us staunch and cautious of grounding Judgment or Censure upon present Events about any Cause, or any Person; for it is notorious Temerity to pass Sentence upon grounds incapable of Evidence. Luke 13. 14.
3. It should repress wanton Curiosity, which may transport us beyond our Bounds in Speculation of these mysterious Intrigues; so that we shall lose our Labour and Time, shall discompose our Minds, shall plunge our selves into vain Errors or anxious Doubts. Job 11. 12.  
Sap. 9. 13.  
Job 42. 3.
4. It should keep us from Conceitedness and Confidence in our own Wisdom; for how can we conceit highly of that, or much confide in it, which we find so unable to penetrate the Reason of most common and obvious Appearances; so *non-plust* in its Enquiries, so defeated in its Expectations, so mistaken in its Judgments of things. Job 40. 4.  
42. 2.  
Psal. 73. 22.  
39. 9.
5. It should preserve us from Infidelity, and from Despair upon account of any cross Accidents occurring here; for 'tis unreasonable to disbelieve a Notion, otherwise well grounded, because we cannot assail Scruples or Cavils drawn from Matters inscrutable to us; 'tis foolish to despair of a good Event upon Appearances, whereof we cannot apprehend the full Reason, or final Result.
6. It should prevent our taking Offence, or being discontented at any Events rising up before us; for to be displeased at that, which a superiour Wisdom, unsearchable to us, doth order, is to be displeased at we know not what, or why, which is childish Weakness, to fret and wail at that, which for all we can see, proceedeth from good Intention, and tendeth to good Issue, is pitiful Frowardness. 2 Kings 20. 9.  
Mat. 16. 23.
7. It should guard us from Security, or from presuming upon Impunity for our Miscarriages: For seeing God doth not always clearly and fully discover his Mind, it is vain from God's Reservedness to conclude his Unconcernedness; or because he is now patient, that he never will be just in chastizing our Offences. Ecclef. 8. 11.
8. It should quicken our Industry in observing and considering the Works of Providence; for since they are not easily discernible, and the discerning them in some measure is sometimes of great Use, it is needful that we be very diligent in Contemplation of them; the feinter our Light is, the more attent we should be in looking; the knottier the Subject, the more earnest should be our Study on it. Isa. 26. 11.  
5. 12.
9. It should oblige us to be circumspect and wary in our Conversation; for the darker the Way is, the more careful should be our Walking therein, lest we err, lest we stumble, lest we strike on somewhat hurtful to us.
10. It should engage us constantly to seek God, and to depend on him, for the Protection and Conduct of his Grace, which is the only Clue, that can lead us safely through this intricate Labyrinth of worldly Contingencies. Jer. 10. 23.
11. In fine, it should cause us humbly to admire and adore that Wisdom, which governeth the World in ways no less great and wonderful than just and holy. Psal. 36. 6.  
92. 5.

For



Apoc. 15. 3. For Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord, God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, O thou king of Saints.

19. 2.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. AMEN.

## SERMON XXIV.

### Of Obedience to our Spiritual GUIDES and GOVERNOURS.

HEB. XIII. 17.

*Obeys them that have the rule over you.*

**O**bedience unto Spiritual Guides and Governours is a Duty of great Importance; the which to declare and press is very seasonable for these times, wherein so little Regard is had thereto; I have therefore pitched on this Text, being an Apostolical Precept, briefly and clearly enjoining that Duty: And in it we shall consider and explain these two Particulars: I. The Persons to whom Obedience is to be payed. II. What that Obedience doth import, or wherein it consisteth: And together with Explication of the Duty, we shall apply it, and urge its Practice.

I. As to the Persons unto whom Obedience is to be performed, they are, generally speaking, all spiritual Guides, or Governours of the Church (those who speak to us the word of God, and who watch for our souls, as they are describ'd in the Context) expressed here by a Term very significant and apposite, as implying fully the Nature of their Charge, the Qualification of their Persons, their Rank and Privileges in the Church, together consequently with the Grounds of Obligation to the correspondent Duties toward them. There are in holy Scripture divers Names and Phrases appropriate to them, each of them denoting some eminent Part of their Office, or some Appurtenance thereto; but this seemeth of all most comprehensive; so that unto it all the rest are well reducible: The Term is *ἡγούμενοι*, that is, *Leaders*, or *Guides*, or *Captains*; which properly may denote the subsequent Particulars in way of Duty, or Privilege appertaining to them.

1. It may denote Eminence of Dignity, or Superiority to others: That they are (as it is said of Judas and Silas in the Acts) *ἀνδρες ἡγούμενοι ἐν ἀδελφοῖς*, *principal Men among the Brethren*: For to lead, implieth Precedence, which is a Note of Superiority and Preheminence. Hence are they stiled *πρεσβύτεροι*, *Presidents* or *Preslates*; *οἱ πρῶτοι*, the first or prime Men; *οἱ μέγιστοι*, the greater, Majors or Grandees among us: He (saith our Lord) that will be the first among you, let him be your servant; and He that is greater among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve; where *ὁ μέγας*, and *ὁ ἡγούμενος* (the greater and the Leader) are Terms equivalent, or interpretative the one of the other; and our Lord in those Places as he prescribeth Humility of Mind and Demeanour, so he implieth Difference of Rank among his Disciples: Whence to render especial Respect and Honour to them, as to our Betters, is a Duty often enjoined.

2. It doth imply Power and Authority: Their Superiority is not barely grounded on personal Worth or Fortune; it serveth not merely for Order, and Pomp; but it standeth upon the Nature of their Office, and tendeth to Use: They are by God's



God's Appointment enabled to exercise Acts of Power ; to command, to judge, to check, controul, and chastise in a spiritual way, in order to spiritual Ends ; (the Regulation of God's Worship and Service, the Preservation of Order and Peace, the promoting of Edification in divine Knowledge, in Holiness of Life) so are they ἡγούμενοι, as that Word in common Use (as the Word ἡγούμενον of kin to it) doth signifie *Captains* and *Princes* ; importing Authority to command and rule ; whence the Hebrew Word נָשִׂי, a *Prince*, is usually rendred by it ; and ὁ ἡγούμενος, is the Title, attributed to our Lord, to expresse his kingly Function, being the same with ἀρχηγός, the *Prince* or *Captain*.) Hence are they otherwise stiled κυβερνήται (*Governors*) ἐπισκοποί (*Overseers*, or *Superintendents*) as St. Jerome rendreth it) *Pastors* (a Word often signifying *Rule*, and attributed to civil Governours) πρεσβύτεροι (*Elders*, or *Senators*; the Word denoteth not merely Age, but Office and Authority) οἱ ἐπιμελῶντες, such as take care for, the *Curators* or *Supervisors of the Church* : Hence also they are signally and specially in relation unto God stiled δούλοι (*the Servants*) διάκονοι (*the Ministers*) ὑπηρέται (*the Officers*) λειτουργοὶ (*the publick Agents*) οἰκονόμοι (*the Stewards*) συνεργοὶ (*the Coadjutors*, or *Assistants*) πρέσβεις (*the Legates*) ἀγγελοὶ (*the Angels*, or *Messengers*) of God ; which Titles imply, that God by them, as his Substitutes and Instruments, doth administer the Affairs of his spiritual Kingdom ; that as by secular Magistrates (his Vicegerents and Officers) he manageth his universal temporal Kingdom, or governeth all Men in order to their worldly Peace and Prosperity ; so by these spiritual Magistrates he ruleth his Church, toward its spiritual Welfare and Felicity.

3. The Word also doth imply Direction or Instruction ; that is, Guidance of People in the way of Truth and Duty, reclaiming them Error and Sin ; This, as it is a means hugely conducing to the Design of their Office, so it is a principal Member thereof : Whence διδασκαλοὶ *Doctors*, or *Masters in Doctrine*, is a common Name of them ; and to be διδακτικὸς, *able and apt to teach* (ἵκανοὶ διδάσκειν and πρεσβυτοὶ) is a chief Qualification of their Persons ; and to attend on teaching, to be instant in preaching, to labour in the word and doctrine are their most commendable Performances : Hence also they were called *Shepherds*, because they feed the Souls of God's People with the Food of wholesome Instruction ; *Watchmen*, because they observe Men's ways, and warn them when they decline from right, or run into Danger ; the *Messengers of God*, because they declare God's Mind and Will unto them for the Regulation of their Practice.

4. The Word farther may denote exemplary Practice ; for to lead implieth so to go before, that he who is conducted may follow ; as a Captain marcheth before his Troop ; as a Shepherd walketh before his Flock, as a Guide goeth before the Traveller, whom he directeth ; hence they are said to be, and enjoined to behave themselves, as patterns of the flock ; and the People are charged to imitate and follow them.

Such in general doth the Word here used imply the Persons to be, unto whom Obedience is prescribed ; but there is farther some Distinction to be made among them ; there are Degrees and Subordinations in these Guidances ; some are in regard to different Persons both impowered to guide, and obliged to follow or obey.

The Church is *acies ordinata*, a well-marshalled Army, wherein under the *Captain General of our Faith and Salvation* (the *Head of the Body*, the *Sovereign Prince* and *Priest*, the *Arch-Pastor*, the chief *Apostle of our profession*, and *Bishop of our Souls*) there are divers Captains serving in fit Degrees of Subordination ; Bishops commanding large Regiments, Presbyters ordering less numerous Companies ; all which by the Bands of common Faith, of mutual Charity, of Holy Communion, and Peace being combined together, do in their respective Stations govern and guide, are governed and guided : The Bishops, each in his Precincts guiding more immediately the Priests subject to them ; the Priests, each guiding the People committed to his Charge ; all Bishops and Priests being guided by Synods established or congregated upon emergent Occasion ; many of them ordinarily by those principal Bishops, who are regularly settled in a Presidency over them ; according to the Distinctions constituted by God and his Apostles, or introduced by Human Prudence, as the Preservation of Order and Peace (in various times and Circumstances of things) hath seemed to require ; to which Subordination the



1 Pet. 5. 5. Eph. 5. 21. Phil. 2. 3.  
 ὁποῦναι ὡς ἑαυτοῖς καὶ ὡς τοῖς ἀλλοῖς  
 Clem. ad Corinth. p. 49.

two great *Apostles* may seem to have regard, when they bid us ὑποτάσσεσθαι ἀλλήλοις, to be subject to one another; their Injunction at least may (according to their general Intent, which aimeth at the Preservation of Order and Peace) be well extended so far.

Cyp. Ep. 10.  
 Ep. 12.

Ep. 27. Ep. 65.

Of this Distinction there was never in ancient times made any question, nor did it seem disputable in the Church, except to one Malecontent (*Arrius*) who did indeed get a Name in Story, but never made much Noise, or obtained any vogue in the World: Very few followers he found in his Heterodoxy; No great Body even of *Hereticks* could find Cause to dissent from the Church in this Point; but all *Arians*, *Macedonians*, *Novatians*, *Donatists*, &c. maintained the Distinction of Ecclesiastical Orders among themselves, and acknowledged the Duty of the inferior Clergy to their Bishops: And no wonder, seeing it standeth upon so very firm and clear grounds; upon the Reason of the Case, upon the Testimony of Holy Scripture, upon general Tradition, and unquestionable Monuments of Antiquity, upon the common Judgment and Practice of the greatest Saints, Persons most renown'd for Wisdom and Piety in the Church.

Reason plainly doth require such Subordinations; for that without them it is scarce possible to preserve any durable Concord, or Charity in Christian Societies; to establish any decent Harmony in the Worship and Service of God, to check odious Scandals, to prevent or repress baneful Factions, to guard our Religion from being overspread with pernicious Heresies, to keep the Church from being shattered into numberless Sects, and thence from being crumbled into nothing; in fine, for any good time to uphold the Profession and Practice of Christianity it self: For how, if there be not settled Corporations of Christian People, having bulk and strength sufficient by joyn't endeavour to maintain the truth, honour and interest of their Religion; if the Church should only consist of independent and incoherent Particles (like Dust or Sand) easily scattered by any Wind of opposition from without, or by any Commotion within; if *Christendom* should be merely a *Babel* of confused Opinions and Practices, how, I say, then could Christianity subsist? How could the Simple among so discordant Apprehensions be able to discern the Truth of it, how would the Wise be tempted to dislike it, being so mangled and disfigured? What an Object of Contempt and Scorn would it be to the profaner World, in such a Case? It needeth therefore considerable Societies to uphold it; but no Society (especially of any large extent) can abide in order and peace, under the management of equal and co-ordinate Powers; without a single undivided Authority, enabled to moderate Affairs, and reduce them to a Point, to arbitrate emergent Cases of difference, to put good Orders in execution,

*Ecclesie salus in summi Sacerdotis dignitate consistit, cui non exors quaedam, & ab omnibus detur eminens potestas, tot in Ecclesia efficiuntur schismata, quot sacerdotes. Hier. in Lucif.*

*Nec Presbyterorum catus rite constitutus dici potest, in quo nullus sit iudex.* Bez. de Grad. Min. cap. 22.

*Essentiale fuit, quod ex Dei Ordinatione perpetua necesse fuit, est, & erit, ut Presbyterio quispiam & loco & dignitate Primus actioni gubernanda praeest cum eo, quod ipsi divinitus attributum est jure.* Bez. de Min. Evang. Grad. c. 23. p. 153.

to curb the Adversaries of Order and Peace; these things cannot be well performed, where there is a Parity of many Concurrents, apt to dissent, and able to check each other; no *Democracy* can be supported without borrowing somewhat from *Monarchy*; no Body can live without a Head; an Army cannot be without a General, a Senate without a President, a Corporation without a Supreme Magistrate: this all Experience attesteth; this even the chief Impugners of *Episcopal* Presidency do by their Practice confess; who for prevention of disorder have been fain of their own Heads to devise Ecclesiastical Subordinations of *Classes*, *Provinces* and *Nations*; and to appoint *Moderators* (or temporary Bishops) in their Assemblies; so that Reason hath forced the Dissenters from the Church to imitate it.

If there be not Inspectors over the Doctrine and Manners of the common Clergy, there will be many who will say and do any thing; they will in teaching please their own Humour, or sooth the People, or serve their own Interests; they will indulge themselves in a licentious manner of Life; they will clash in their Doctrines, and scatter the People, and draw them into Factions.

It is also very necessary for preserving the Unity and Communion of the Parts of the Catholick Church; seeing single Persons are much fitter to maintain correspondence than headless Bodies.

The



The very Credit of Religion doth require, that there should be Persons raised above the common Level; and endued with eminent Authority, to whose Care the promoting it should be committed; for such as the Persons are who manage any Profession, such will be the Respect yielded thereto; if the Ministers of Religion be Men of Honour and Authority, Religion it self will be venerable; if those be mean, that will become contemptible.

The Holy Scripture also doth plainly enough countenance this Distinction; for therein we have represented one *Angel* presiding over principal Churches, which contained several *Presbyters*; therein we find Episcopal Ordination, and Jurisdiction exercised; we have one Bishop constituting *Presbyters* in divers *Cities* of his *Diocese*; ordering all things therein concerning Ecclesiastical Discipline; judging *Presbyters*, rebuking, *μετὰ πωρὸς ἐκταλῶν*, with all authority (or imperiousness, as it were; *Tit. 2. 15.*) and reconciling Offenders, secluding Hereticks, and scandalous Persons. Apoc. 2, 3. & c. Tit. 1. 5. 1 Tim. 5. 17, 19, 20, 22 & c.

In the *Jewish Church* there were an *High-Priest*, *Chief-Priest*, a *Sanhedrin*, or *Senate*, or *Synod*.

The Government of Congregations among God's ancient People (which it is probable was the Pattern that the *Apostles*, no Affecters of needless Innovation, did follow in establishing Ecclesiastical Discipline among Christians) doth hereto agree; for in their *Synagogues*, answering to our Christian Churches, they had as their *Elders* and *Doctors*, so over them an *ἀρχιερεὺς ἡγεμὼν*, the *Head of the Eldership*, and *President of the Synagogue*.

The primitive general Use of Christians most effectually doth back the Scripture, and interpret it in favour of this Distinction; scarce less than demonstrating it constituted by the *Apostles*; for how otherwise is it imaginable, that all the Churches founded by the *Apostles* in several most distant and disjoined Places (at *Jerusalem*, at *Antioch*, at *Alexandria*, at *Ephesus*, at *Corinth*, at *Rome*) should presently conspire in acknowledgment and use of it? How could it without apparent Confederacy be formed, how could it creep in without notable Clatter, how could it be admitted without considerable Opposition, if it were not in the Foundation of those Churches laid by the *Apostles*? How is it likely, that in those Times of grievous Persecution falling chiefly upon the *Bishops* (when to be eminent among Christians yielded slender Reward, and exposed to extreme Hazard; when to seek Preheminence was in effect to court Danger and Trouble, Torture and Ruin) an Ambition of irregularly advancing themselves above their Brethren should so generally prevail among the ablest and best Christians? How could those famous Martyrs for the Christian Truth be some of them so unconscionable as to affect, others so irresolute as to yield to such injurious Encroachments? And how could all the Holy Fathers (Persons of so renowned, so approved Wisdom and Integrity) be so blind as not to discern such a Corruption, or so bad as to abett it? How indeed could all God's Church be so weak as to consent in Judgment, so base as to comply in Practice with it? In fine, how can we conceive, that all the best Monuments of Antiquity, down from the beginning (the *Acts*, the *Epistles*, the *Histories*, the *Commentaries*, the *Writings* of all sorts coming from the Blessed *Martyrs*, and most Holy *Confessors* of our Faith) should conspire to abuse us; the which do speak nothing but *Bishops*; long *Catalogues* and rows of *Bishops* succeeding in this and that *City*; *Bishops* contesting for the Faith against *Pagan Idolaters*, and *Heretical Corrupters* of Christian Doctrine; *Bishops* here teaching, and planting our Religion by their Labours, there suffering, and watering it with their Blood.

I could not but touch this Point: But I cannot insist thereon; the full Discussion of it, and Vindication of the Truth from the cavils advanced against the Truth by modern Dissenters from the Church, having employed voluminous Treatises; I shall only further add, That if any Man be so dully, or so affectedly ignorant as not to see the reason of the Case, and the dangerous Consequences of rejecting this ancient Form of Discipline; if any be so overweeningly presumptuous, as to question the Faith of all History, or to disavow those Monuments and that Tradition, upon the Testimony whereof even the Truth and Certainty of our Religion, and all its sacred Oracles do rely; if any be so perversely contentious, as to oppose the Custom, and current Practice of the Churches through all Ages down to the last Age; so self-conceitedly arrogant, as to condemn or slight the Judgment, and Practice of all the Fathers (together also with the Opinion of the later



most grave *Divines*, who have judged Episcopal Presidency needful, or expedient, where practicable) so peevishly refractory as to thwart the settled Order of that Church, in which he was baptized, together with the Law of the Countrey, in which he was born; upon such a Person we may look as one utterly invincible, and intractable: So weak a Judgment, and so strong a Will who can hope by Reason to convert? I shall say no more to that Point.

The *ἐνταυτοι* then (the Guides and Governours) in our *Text* are primarily the *Bishops*, as the superiour and chief Guides, each in his Place according to Order peaceably established; then secondarily the *Presbyters* in their Station as Guides inferior, together with the *Deacons* as their Assistants; such the Church always hath had, and such by God's Blessing, our Church now hath, toward whom the Duty of Obedience is to be performed.

To the Consideration of that I should now proceed, but first it seemeth expedient to remove a main Obstruction to that Performance, which is this; a Misprision, or Doubt concerning the Persons of our Guides and Governours; for in vain it would be to teach or persuade us to obey them, if we do not know who they are, or will not acknowledge them: For as in Religion it is *Primus Deorum cultus Deos credere*, The first worship of God to believe God (as *Seneca* saith) so it is the first Part of our Obedience to our Governours to avow them; it is at least absolutely prerequisite thereto. It was of old a Precept of St. Paul to the *Thessalonians*:  
 1 Thess. 5. 12. *We beseech you Brethren to know those, who labour among you; and preside over you;*  
 1 Cor. 16. 16, 18. *and another to the Corinthians; Submit your selves (saith he) to such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth—* then he subjoineth *ἐμψυχωμεν τὰς τοιὰς, acknowledge such*; there were, it seemeth, those in the Apostolical Times, who would not know, or acknowledge their Guides; there were even those, who would not admit the Apostles themselves (as St. John saith of *Diotrephes*) who resisted their words (as St. Paul saith of *Alexander*) to whom the Apostles were not Apostles, as St. Paul intimateth concerning some in regard to himself; there were then *Pseud-apostles*, who excluded the true Apostles, intruding themselves into that high Office: No wonder then it may be, that now in these Dregs of Time, there should be many, who disavow, and desert their true Guides, transferring the Observance due to them upon bold Pretenders; who are not indeed Guides, but Seducers; not Governours, but Usurpers, and sacrilegious Invaders of this Holy Office: The Duty we speak of cannot be secured without preventing or correcting this grand Mistake; and this we hope to compass by representing a double Character or Description, one of the true Guides, another of the Counterfeits, by comparing which we may easily distinguish them, and consequently be induced dutifully to avow and follow the one Sort, wisely to disclaim and decline the other.

Those, I say, then, who constantly do profess, and teach that sound and wholesome Doctrine, which was delivered by our Lord, and his Apostles in Word and Writing, was received by their Disciples in the primitive Churches, was transmitted and confirmed by general Tradition, was sealed by the Blood of the blessed Martyrs, and propagated by the Labours of the Holy Fathers; the which also manifestly recommendeth and promoteth true Reverence and Piety toward God, Justice and Charity toward Men, Order and Quiet in human Societies, Purity and Sobriety in each Man's private Conversation.

Those who celebrate the true Worship of God, and administer the Holy Mysteries of our Religion in a serious, grave, decent manner, purely and without any notorious Corruption either by hurtful Error, or superstitious Poppery, or irreverent Rudeness, to the Advancement of God's Honour, and Edification of the Participants in Vertue and Piety.

Those who derive their Authority by a continued Succession from the Apostles; who are called unto, and constituted in their Office in a regular and peaceable way, agreeable to the Institution of God, and the constant Practice of his Church; according to Rules approved in the best and purest Ages; who are prepared to the exercise of their Function by the best Education, that ordinarily can be provided, under sober Discipline, in the Schools of the Prophets, who thence by competent endowments of Mind, and useful Furniture of good Learning, acquired by painful Study, become qualified to guide and instruct the People: Who after previous Examination of their Abilities, and probable Testimonies concerning their Manners (with regard to the Qualifications of incorrupt Doctrine, and sober Conversation



sation prescribed by the *Apostles*) are adjudged fit for the Office; who also in a pious, grave, solemn manner, with Invocation of God's Blessing, by laying on the hands of the *Presbytery* are admitted thereunto. 1 Tim. 3. 7.  
10.

Those whose Practice in guiding and governing the People of God is not managed by arbitrary, uncertain, fickle, private Fancies or Humours, but regulated by standing Laws; framed (according to general Directions extant in Holy Scripture) by pious and wise Persons, with mature Advice, in Accommodation to the Seasons and Circumstances of Things for common Edification, Order and Peace.

Those who, by virtue of their good Principles, in their Disposition and Demour appear sober, orderly, peaceable, yielding meek Submission to Government, tending the Churches Peace, upholding the Communion of the Saints, abstaining from all schismatical, turbulent and factious Practices.

Those also, who are acknowledged by the Laws of our Countrey, an Obligation to obey whom is Part of that *human Constitution*, unto which we are in all things (not evidently repugnant to God's Law) indispensibly bound to submit; whom our Sovereign, God's Vicegerent, and the nursing Father of his Church among us (unto whom in all things high Respect, in all lawful things entire Obedience is due) doth command and encourage us to obey: 1 Pet. 2. 13.

Those, I say, to whom this Character plainly doth agree, we may reasonably be assured, that they are our true Guides and Governours, whom we are obliged to follow and obey: For what better Assurance can we in reason desire? What more proper Marks can be assigned to discern them by? What Methods of constituting such needful Officers can be settled more answerable to their Design and Use? How can it be evil or unsafe to follow Guides authorized by such Warrants, conformed to such Patterns, endowed with such Dispositions, acting by such Principles and Rules? Can we mistake, or miscarry, by complying with the great Body of God's Church through all Ages, and particularly with those great Lights of the Primitive Church, who by the Excellency of their Knowledge, and the Integrity of their Virtue have so illustrated our Holy Religion?

There are on the other hand sufficiently plain Characters, by which we may descry Seducers, and false Pretenders to guide us.

Those who do *ἐνεδιδασκάλειν*, teach otherwise, or discourse from the good ancient whollome, revealed in the Holy Scripture, attested by *Universal Tradition*, professed, taught, maintained to Death by the Primitive Saints and Martyrs; who affect Novelty, uncouth Notions, big Words, and dark Phrases, who dote on curious empty Speculations, and idle Questions, which engender Strife, and yield no good Fruit. 1 Tim. 6. 3.  
1. 3. 4.  
Gal. 1. 9.  
1 Tim. 1. 4.  
6. 4. 20.  
2 Tim. 2. 14.  
16. 23.  
Tit. 3. 9.  
2 Pet. 2. 18.  
Ipsorum ordinationes temerarias, inconstantes, leves, Tertull.

Those who ground their Opinions, and warrant their Proceedings not by clear Testimonies of divine Revelation, by the Dictates of sound Reason, by the current Authority of wise and good Men, but by the Suggestions of their own Fancy, by the Impulses of their Passion and Zeal, by Pretences to special Inspiration, by imaginary Necessities, and such like fallacious Rules.

Those who by counterfeit Shews of mighty Zeal, and extraordinary Affection, by affected Forms of Speech, by pleasing Notions, by prophesying *smooth things*, *daubing* and *glossing*, by various Artifices of Flattery and Fraud attract and abuse weak and heedless People.

Those who without any apparent Commission from God, or allowable Call from Men, or extraordinary necessity of the case, in no legal or regular way, according to no custom received in God's Church, do intrude themselves into the Office, or are only assumed thereto by ignorant, unstable, giddy, factious People, such as those of whom St. Paul saith, that according to their own Lusts they heap up teachers to themselves, having itching ears. 2 Tim. 4. 3.

Those who are not in reasonable ways fitly prepared, not duly approved, not competently authorized, not orderly admitted to the Office, according to the Prescriptions of God's Word, and the practice of his Church; not entering into the fold by the door, but breaking through, or clambering over the fences of sober Discipline.

Those who in their mind, their principles, their designs, and all their practice appear void of that charity, that meekness, that calmness, that gravity, that sincerity, that stability, which qualifie worthy and true Guides: Who in the disposition

*Hi sunt qui se ultro apud temerarios convenas sine divina dispositione praeficiunt, qui se praepositos sine ulla ordinationis lege constituunt, qui nemine Episcopatum dante Episcopi sibi nomen assumunt.* Cyr. de Un. Eccl. p. 256.



position of their mind are froward, fierce, and stubborn, in their principles loose and slippery, in their designs and behaviour turbulent, disorderly, violent, deceitful: Who regard not order or peace, but wantonly raise scandals, create dissensions, abett and foment disturbances in the Church. Who under religious appearances indulge their passions, and serve their interests, using a guise of devotion, and talk about holy things as instruments to vent wrath, envy and spleen; to drive forward designs of ambition and avarice; who will not submit to any certain judgment or rule, will like nothing but what their fancy suggests, will acknowledge no law but their own will; who for no just cause, and upon any slender pretence withdraw themselves, and seduce others from the Church in which they were brought up, deserting its Communion, impugning its Laws, defaming its Governours, endeavouring to subvert its Establishment: Who manage their discipline (such as it is of their own framing) unadvisedly and unsteadily, in no stable method, according to no settled rule, but as present conceit, or humour, or advantage prompteth; so that not being fixed in any certain judgment or practice, they soon clash with themselves, and divide from one another; incessantly roving from one Sect to another; *being carried about with divers and strange Doctrines; like Children tossed to and fro with every wind of Doctrine.*

Heb. 13. 9.  
Eph. 4. 14.

Those, the fruits of whose Doctrine and Managery amount at best only to empty form of godliness, void of real virtue; while in truth they fill the Minds of Men with ill-passions, ill-surmises, ill-will; they produce impious, unjust and uncharitable dealing of all Kinds, particularly discontentful Murmurings, Disobedience to Magistrates; Schisms and Factions in the Church; Combinations and Seditions in the State.

2 Tim. 3. 13.

In fine those, who in their Temper and their Deportment resemble those ancient Seducers, branded in the Scripture, those *evil Men, who did seduce, and were seduced.*

Tit. 1. 10.

Whose dispositions are represented in these *Epithets*: They were ἀνυπότακτοι, unruly, or Persons indisposed and unwilling to submit to Government; τολμηταί, presumptuous and self-willed, or self-pleasing darers; ῥηγυνταί, μωμολογοί, murmurers, complainers, or conjunctly discontented mutiners, αὐτοκατακριταί, self-condemned, namely, by contradictory shuffling and shifting, or by excommunicating themselves from the Church; ῥήγνυς, bewitchers, inveigling and deluding

2 Pet. 2. 10.

Tit. 3. 10, 11.

2 Tim. 3. 13.

14.

Matt. 7. 15.

Acts 20. 29.

2 Cor. 11. 13.

15.

1 Tim. 6. 4.

2 Pet. 3. 16.

credulous People by Dissimulation, and specious Appearances; *having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; being wolves in sheeps cloathing, grievous wolves not sparing the flock; deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the servants of Christ, and Ministers of righteousness; lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, revilers, truce-breakers, false-accusers, traytours, heady, high-minded, vain talkers, deceivers, ignorant, unlearned, unstable:*

Rom. 16. 17,

18.

(1 Tim. 1. 6,

7.)

Eph. 4. 14.

Acts 20. 19.

2 Tim. 3. 5.

1 Tim. 6. 4.

2 Pet. 2. 18.

Jud. 16.

Tit. 1. 11.

1 Tim. 4. 2.

Phil. 1. 16, 17.

2 Pet. 2. 19.

2 Theff. 3. 6,

11.

2 Pet. 2. 10.

Jude 8.

16.

9.

2 John 9.

Tit. 3. 10.

2 Theff. 3. 6.

Rom. 16. 16.

1 Tim. 6. 5.

Whose Practices were, To cause divisions and offences contrary to received Doctrine: By good words and fair speeches to deceive the hearts of the simple; —To swerve from charity—having turned aside to vain jangling, desiring to be teachers of the Law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. To beguile unstable Souls; To lie in wait to deceive; To speak perverse things that they may draw Disciples after them; to creep into Houses captivating silly women; To doat about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings; To speak swelling words of vanity; To admire persons because of advantage (or out of private design, for self-interest; ) To subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre's sake; to speak lies in hypocrisie; To preach Christ out of envy and strife, not out of good will, or pure intention (ἐκ αἰνῶς, not purely; ) To promise liberty to their followers; To walk disorderly (that is, in repugnance to Order settled in the Church; ) To despise dominion, and without fear to reproach dignities; To speak evil (rashly) of those things which they know not (which are beside their Skill and Cognizance) To separate themselves from the Church.

Such Persons as these, arrogating to themselves the Office of Guides, and pretending to lead us, we must not follow or regard, but are in reason and conscience obliged to reject and shun them, as the Ministers of Satan, the Pests of Christendom, the Enemies and Murderers of Souls.

It can indeed no wise be safe to follow any such Leaders (whatever Pretences to special Illumination they hold forth, whatever specious guises of Sanctity they bear) who in their Doctrine or Practice defect from the great beaten Roads of holy



holy Scripture, primitive Tradition, and Catholick Practice, roving in bye-paths suggested to them by their private Fancies and Humours, their Passions and Lusts, their Interests and Advantages: there have in all Ages such counterfeit Guides started up, having debauched some few heedless Persons, having erected some *ἑταίριας*, or petty Combinations against the regularly settled Corporations; but never with any durable success or countenance of Divine Providence; but like prodigious *Meteors*, having caused a little gazing, and some Disturbance, their Sects have soon been dissipated, and have quite vanished away: the Authors and Abettors of them being either buried in Oblivion, or recorded with Ignominy: like that *Theudas* in the Speech of *Gamaliel*; who rose up boasting himself to be some-body; to whom a number of Men about four hundred joined themselves; who was slain, and all as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. Jude 13.  
Acts 5. 36.

But let thus much suffice to have been spoken concerning the Persons to whom Obedience must be performed.

## SERMON XXV.

### Of Obedience to our Spiritual GUIDES and GOVERNOURS.

H E B. XIII. 17.

*Obey them that have the Rule over you.*

**I** Proceed to the Duty it self, the Obedience prescribed, which may (according to the extent in signification of the Word *πείθεσθαι*) be conceived to relate either to the Government, or to the Doctrine, or to the Conversation of the Persons specified; implying that we should obey their Laws, that we should embrace their Doctrine, that we should conform to their Practice, according to proper Limitations of such Performance, respectively:

We begin with the first, as seeming chiefly intended by the Words:

Obedience to Ecclesiastical Government; what this doth import we may understand by considering the Terms whereby it is expressed, and those whereby its Correlate (spiritual Government) is signified; by Examples and Practice relating to it, by the Nature and Reason of the Matter it self.

Beside the Word *πείθεσθαι* (which is commonly used to signifie all sorts of Obedience, chiefly that which is due to Governours) here is added a Word serving to explain that, the word *ὑπακούειν*, which signifieth to yield, give way, or comply; relating (as it seemeth by its being put indefinitely) to all their Proceedings in matters concerning their Charge. In other Places, parallel to our Text, it is expressed by *ὑποτάσσεσθαι*, the same Term, by which constantly the Subjection due to secular Powers (in all the Precepts enjoyning it) is expressed: *Ὁμῶς νεώτεροι ὑποτάσσεσθαι πρεσβυτέροις*, In like manner (or correspondently saith St. Peter) ye younger submit your selves to the elder (that is, as the Context shews, ye Inferiours in the Church obey your Superiours; ὁ νεώτερος both there and otherwhere doth signifie the State of Inferiority, as ὁ πρεσβύτερος importeth Dignity and Authority.) And *ὑποτάσσεσθαι τοῖς τοῖς τοῖς submit your selves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth*, saith St. Paul; and *ἀλλήλοις ὑποτασσόμενοι*, Submitting your selves to one another in the fear of God, that is, yielding conscientiously that Submission, which established Order requireth from one to another: whence we may collect, that the Duty consisteth in yielding submission and compliance to all Laws,



Laws, Rules and Orders enacted by Spiritual Governours for the due Celebration of God's Worship, the promoting Edification, the conserving Decency, the maintenance of Peace; as also to the Judgments and Censures in order to the same Purposes administered by them.

This Obedience to be due to them may likewise be inferred from the various Names and Titles attributed to them; such as those of *Prelates, Superintendents, Pastours, Supravisors, Governours* and *Leaders*; which Terms, (more largely touched before) do imply Command and Authority of all sorts, *Legislative, Judicial, and Executive*.

Such Obedience also Primitive Practice doth assert to them: for what Authority the holy *Apostles* did assume and exercise, the same we may reasonably suppose derived to them; the same in Kind, although not in peculiarity of Manner (by immediate Commission from *Christ*, with supply of extraordinary Gifts and Graces) and in unlimitedness of extent: for they do succeed to the *Apostles* in charge and care over the Church, each in his Precinct (the Apostolical Office being distributed among them all.) The same Titles which the *Apostles* assumed to themselves, they ascribe to their *Sympresbyters*, requiring the same Duties from them,

*Cujus in solidum singuli participes sumus. Vid. Cypr. de Unit. Eccl.*

2 Cor. 10. 8. 13. 10.  
To ordain Elders.  
To confirm Profelytes.  
To exercise Jurisdiction.

}

med exemplary to all future Governours: As then we see them *διοικῶσαν, to order things, and frame Ecclesiastical Constitutions, διορθῶσαν, to rectify things, or reform defects, to impose Observances necessary or expedient to the time; to judge Causes and Persons, being ready to avenge or punish every disobedience; to use severity upon Occasions; with the spiritual Rod to chastise scandalous Offenders, disorderly walkers, Persons contumacious and unconformable to their Injunctions; to reject Hereticks, and banish notorious Sinners from Communion, warning the Faithful to forbear Conversation with them: As they did challenge to themselves an authority from *Christ* to exercise these and the like Acts of spiritual Dominion and Jurisdiction, exacting punctual Obedience to them; as we also see the like Acts exercised by Bishops, whom they did constitute to feed and rule the Church; so we may reasonably conceive all Governours of the Church (the Heirs of their Office) invested with like Authority in order to the same Purposes, and that correspondent Obedience is due to them; so that what blame, what punishment was due to those, who disobeyed the *Apostles*, doth in proportion belong to the Transgressors of their Duty toward the present Governours of the Church; especially considering that our Lord promised his perpetual Presence and Assistance to the *Apostles*.*

We may farther observe, That accordingly in continual Succession from the first Ages, the good primitive *Bishops* (the great Patrons and Propagators of our Religion) did generally assume such Power, and the People readily did yield Obedience; wherein that one did wrongfully usurp, the other did weakly comply, were neither probable, nor just to suppose; whence general Tradition doth also confirm our Obligation to this Duty.

That this kind of Obedience is required doth also farther appear from considering the Reason of Things, the Condition of the Church, the Design of the Christian Religion.

1. Every Christian Church is a Society; no Society can abide in any comely Order, any steady Quiet, any desirable Prosperity without Government; no Government can stand without correspondent Obligation to submit thereto.

2. Again, The State of Religion under the Gospel is the Kingdom of Heaven; *Christ* our Lord is King of the Church; it he visibly governeth and ordereth by the spiritual Governours as his Substitutes and Lieutenants (whence they peculiarly are stiled his *Ministers*, his *Officers*, his *Stewards*, his *Legates*, his *Co-workers*.) When he ascending up to God's Right hand was invested with entire Possession of that Royal State, he settled them to administer Affairs concerning that Government in his Place and Name; *Ascending up on high he gave gifts unto men—He gave some Apostles, some Prophets, some Evangelists, some Pastours and Teachers; He gave them, that is, he appointed them in their Office, subordinate to himself, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ;*

Eph. 4. 8, 11, 12.



*Christ* ; As to him therefore ruling by them, by them enacting Laws, dispensing Justice, maintaining Order and Peace, Obedience is due.

3. Again, For the Honour of God, the Commendation of Religion, and Benefit of the People, it is needful that in all religious Performances, Things should, according to St. Paul's Rule, be performed *decently, and according to order*, without inhandson Confusion, and troublesome Distraction ; this cannot be accomplished without a Determination of Persons, of Modes, of Circumstances appertaining to those Performances ; for how can any thing be performed decently, if every Person hath not his Rank and Station, his Office and Work allotted to him ; if to every thing to be done, its time, its place, its manner of Performance be not assigned, so that each one may know what, when, where, and how he must do ? Such Determination must be committed to the Discretion and Care of some Persons, impower'd to frame standing Laws or Rules concerning it, and to see them duly executed (for all Persons without delay, strife, confusion, and disturbance cannot meddle in it) with these Persons all the rest of the Body must be obliged to comply ; otherwise all such Determinations will be vain and ineffectual. Such Order, Reason doth recommend in every Proceeding ; such Order especially becometh the Grandeur and Importance of sacred Things ; such Order God hath declared himself to approve, and love, especially in his own House, among his People, in Matters relating to his Service ; for *He is not* (as St. Paul saith, arguing to this Purpose) *the God of confusion, but of peace, in all Churches of the Saints.*

4. Again, It is requisite that all Christian Brethren should conspire in serving God with mutual Charity, hearty Concord, harmonious Consent ; that (as the Apostles so often prescribed) they *should endeavour to keep unity of spirit in the bond of peace* : That they should be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind, standing fast in one spirit, with one mind ; That they should walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing ; That with one mind, and one mouth they should glorify God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ; That they should all speak the same thing ; and that there be no Divisions among them, but that they be perfectly joyned together in the same mind, and in the same judgment ; (like those in the Acts, of whom it is said, *The multitude of believers had one heart, and one soul*) That there should be no schisms (Divisions, or Factions) in the body ; that all Dissentions, all murmurings, all Emulations should be discarded from the Church : The which Precepts, secluding an Obligation to Obedience, would be impossible, and vain ; for (without continual Miracle, and transforming Human Nature, Things not to be expected from God, who apparently designeth to manage Religion by ordinary ways of human Prudence, his gracious Assistance concurring) no durable Concord in any Society can ever effectually be maintained otherwise than by one publick Reason, Will and Sentence, which may represent, connect, and comprize all ; in defect of that every one will be of a several Opinion about what is best, each will be earnest for the Prevalence of his Model and Way ; there will be so many Law-givers as Persons, so many Differences as Matters incident ; nothing will pass smoothly and quietly, without bickering and jangling : and consequently without Animosities and Feuds ; whence no Unanimity, no Concord, scarce any Charity or Good-will can subsist.

5. Farther, in Consequence of these Things, common Edification requireth such Obedience : It is the Duty of Governours to order all things to this End, that is, to the Maintenance, Encouragement, and Improvement of Piety ; for this Purpose their Authority was given them (as St. Paul saith) and therefore it must be deemed thereto conducive ; it is indeed very necessary to Edification, which without Discipline guiding the simple and ignorant, reclaiming the erroneous and presumptuous, cherishing the regular, and correcting the refractory, can no wise be promoted.

Excluding it, there can be no means of checking or redressing Scandals, which to the reproach of Religion, to the disgrace of the Church, to the corrupting the Minds, and infecting the Manners of Men, will spring up, and spread. Neither can there be any way to prevent the rise and growth of pernicious Errors or Heresies ; the which assuredly in a State of unrestrained Liberty the wanton and wicked Minds of Men will breed, their licentious Practice will foster, and propagate ; to the increase of all impiety ; their mouths must be stopped, otherwise they will subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre sake ; the



word of naughty Seducers will spread like a gangrene, if there be no corrosive or corrective Remedy to stay its Progress.

Where Things are not managed in a stable, quiet, orderly way, no good Practice can flourish or thrive; Dissention will choak all good Affections, Confusion will obstruct all good Proceedings; from Anarchy Emulation and Strife will certainly grow, and from them all Sorts of Wickedness; for *where* (saith St. James) *there is emulation and strife, there is confusion, and every evil thing.*

jam. 3. 16.

All those Benefits, which arise from holy Communion in Offices of Piety and Charity (from common Prayers and Praises to God, from participation in all sacred Ordinances, from mutual Advice, Admonition, Encouragement, Consolation, good Example) will together vanish with Discipline; these depend upon the friendly union and correspondence of the Members; and no such Union can abide without the Ligament of Discipline, no such Correspondence can be upheld without unanimous Compliance to publick Order. The Cement of Discipline wanting, the Church will not be like a *spiritual house*, compacted of *lively stones* into one goodly Pile: but like a Company of scattered Peebles, or a heap of Rubbish.

1 Pet. 2. 5.

So considering the reason of Things, this Obedience will appear needful; to enforce the Practice thereof we may adjoin several weighty Considerations.

Consider Obedience what it is, whence it springs, what it produceth, each of those Respects will engage us to it.

It is in it self a Thing very good and acceptable to God, very just and equal, very wise, very comely and pleasant.

*Tempus est, — ut de submissione provocent in se Dei clementiam, & de honore debito in Dei sacerdotem eliciant in se divinam misericordiam. Cypr. Ep. 30.*

It cannot but be grateful unto God, who is the God of Love, of Order, of Peace, and therefore cannot but like the Means furthering them; he cannot but be pleased to see Men do their Duty, especially that which regardeth his own Ministers; in the Respect performed to whom he is himself indeed avowed, and honoured, and obeyed.

It is a just and equal Thing, that every Member of Society should submit to the Laws and Orders of it; for every Man is supposed upon those Terms to enter into, and to abide in it; every Man is deemed to owe such Obedience in answer to his enjoyment of Privileges, and partaking of Advantages thereby; so therefore whoever pretendeth a Title to those excellent Immunities, Benefits and Comforts, which Communion with the Church affordeth, it is most equal, that he should contribute to its Support and Welfare, its Honour, its Peace; that consequently he should yield Obedience to the Orders appointed for those Ends. Particularly equal it is in regard to our Spiritual Governours, who are obliged to be very solicitous and laborious in furthering our best good; who stand deeply engaged, and are responsible for the welfare of our Souls: They must be contented to *spend, and be spent*, to undergo any Pains, any Hardships, any Dangers and Crosses, occurring in pursuance of those Designs: And is it not then plainly equal (is it not indeed more than equal, doth not all Ingenuity and Gratitude require?) that we should encourage, and comfort them in bearing those Burthens, and in discharging those Incumbrances by a fair and chearful Compliance? 'Tis the *Apostle's* enforcement of the Duty in our Text: *Obey them* (saith he) *and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as those, who are to render an account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief* (or groaning.)

Is it not indeed extreme Iniquity and Ingratitude, when they with anxious Care, and earnest Toil are endeavouring our Happiness, that we should vex and trouble them by our perverse and cross Behaviour?

Nay, is it not palpable Folly to do thus, seeing thereby we do indispose and hinder them from effectually discharging their Duty to our Advantage? *Ἀλλοσιπλὴς ὁ ὑμῶν τὸν*, for this (addeth the *Apostle*, farther pressing the Duty) *is unprofitable to you*, or it tendeth to your Disadvantage and Damage; not only as involving Guilt, but as inferring Loss; the loss of all those spiritual Benefits, which Ministers being encouraged, and thence performing their Office with Alacrity and sprightly Diligence would procure to you: It is therefore our Wisdom to be obedient, because Obedience is so advantageous and profitable to us.

The same is also a comely and amiable Thing, yielding much Grace, procuring great Honour to the Church, highly adorning and crediting Religion: It is a goodly sight to behold Things proceeding orderly; to see every Person quietly resting



resting in his Post, or moving evenly in his Rank; to observe Superiors calmly leading, Inferiors gladly following, and Equals lovingly accompanying each other: This is the Psalmist's *Ecce quam bonum! Behold, how (admirably) good, and how pleasant it is for Brethren to dwell together in unity!* Such a State of Things argueth the good Temper and Wisdom of Persons so demeaning themselves, the Excellency of the Principles, which do guide and act them, the Goodness of the Constitution which they observe; so it crediteth the Church, and graceth Religion; a thing which (as St. Paul teacheth) *in all things* we should endeavour.

It is also a very pleasant and comfortable Thing to live in Obedience; by it we enjoy Tranquility of Mind, and Satisfaction of Conscience, we taste all the Sweetness of Amity and Peace, we are freed from the Strings of inward Remorse, we escape the Grievances of Discord and Strife.

The Causes also and Principles, from which Obedience springeth, do much commend it: It ariseth from the Dispositions of Soul, which are most Christian, and most Human; from Charity, Humility, Meekness, Sobriety of Mind, and Calmness of Passion; the which always dispose Men to submissive, complaisant, peaceable Demeanour toward all Men, especially toward those, whose Relation to them claimeth such Demeanour; these a genuine, free, cordial and constant Obedience do signifie to live in the Soul; together with a general Honesty of Intention, and Exemption from base Designs.

In fine, innumerable and inestimable are the Benefits and good Fruits accruing from this Practice: Beside the Support it manifestly yieldeth to the Church, the Gracefulness of Order, the Conveniences and Pleasures of Peace, it hath also a notable Influence upon the common Manners of Men, which hardly can ever prove very bad, where the Governours of the Church do retain their due Respect and Authority; nothing more powerfully doth instigate to Vertue, than the Countenance of Authority, nothing more effectually can restrain from Exorbitancy of Vice, than the Bridle of Discipline: This obvious Experience demonstrateth, and we shall plainly see, if we reflect upon those Times when Piety and Vertue have most flourished: Whence was it, that in those good old Times Christians did so abound in good Works, that they burnt with holy Zeal, that they gladly would do, would suffer any thing for their Religion? Whence but from a mighty Respect to their Superiours; from a strict Regard to their Direction and Discipline? Did the Bishops then prescribe long Fasts, or impose rigid Penances? Willingly did the People undergo them; Did the Pastor conduct into Danger, did he lead them into the very Jaws of Death, and Martyrdom? The Flock with a resolute Alacrity did follow; Did a Prelate interdict any Practice scandalous, or prejudicial to the Church; under pain of incurring Censure? Every Man trembled at the Consequences of transgressing:

No terror of worldly Power, no severity of Justice, no dread of corporal Punishment had such Efficacy to deter Men from ill-doing, as the Reproof and Censure of a Bishop; his Frown could avail more than the Menaces of an Emperor, than the Rage of a Persecutor, than the Rods and Axes of an Executioner: No Rod indeed did smart like the spiritual Rod, no Sword did cut so deep as that of the Spirit; no Loss was then so valuable, as being deprived of spiritual Advantages; no Banishment was so grievous as being separated from Holy Communion; no Sentence of Death was so terrible, as that which cut Men off from the Church: No Thunder could astonish or fright Men like the Crack of a spiritual *Anathema*: This was that which kept Vertue in request, and Vice in detestation, hence it was that Men were so good, that Religion did so thrive, that so frequent, and so illustrious Examples of Piety did appear: Hence indeed we may well reckon that Christianity did (under so many Disadvantages and Oppositions) subsist, and grow up; Obedience to Governours was its Guard; that kept the Church firmly united in a Body sufficiently strong to maintain it self against all Assaults of Faction within, of Opposition from abroad; that preserved that Concord, which disposed and enabled Christians to defend their Religion against all Fraud and Violence: that cherished the true Vertue, and the beautiful Order, which begot Veneration to Religion; to it therefore we owe the Life and Growth of Christianity, so that through many sharp Persecutions it hath held up its Head; through so many perillous Diseases it hath kept its Life until this Day. There were not then of

*Neque hoc ita dixerim, ut negligatur Ecclesiastica disciplina, & permittatur quisquam facere quod velit sine ulla correptione, & quadam medicinali vindicta, & terribili lenitate, & charitatis severitate. Aug. adv. Petil. 3. 4.*



old any such Cavils and Clamours against every thing prescribed by Governours; there were no such unconscionable Scruples, no such hard-hearted Pretences to tender Conscience devised to baffle the Authority of Superiours; had there been such, had Men then commonly been so froward and factious as now, the Church had been soon shivered into Pieces, our Religion had been swallowed up in Confusion and Licentiousness.

If again we on the other hand fix our Consideration upon Disobedience, (the Nature, the Sources, the Consequences thereof) it will, I suppose, much conduce to the same effect, of persuading us to the Practice of this Duty.

It is in its self a heinous Sin, being the Transgression of a Command in nature and consequence very important, upon which God layeth great stress, which is frequently inculcated in Scripture, which is fenced by divers other Precepts, which is pressed by strong Arguments, and backed by severe threatnings of Punishment upon the Transgressors.

It is in its nature a kind of Apostasie from Christianity, and Rebellion against our Lord; for as he that refuseth to obey the King's Magistrates in Administration of their Office is interpreted to disclaim his Authority, and to design Rebellion against him: so they who obstinately disobey the Ministers of our Lord's spiritual Kingdom, do thereby appear to disavow him, to shake off his Yoke, to impeach his Reign over them; so doth he himself interpret and take it: *He (saith our Lord) that heareth you, heareth me, and he that (ὁ ἀδιστάων, that baffleth) despiseth you, despiseth me; and, If any man neglect to hear the Church (or shall disobey it, ὁ ἀντιτάσσων) let him be to thee as a heathen, and a publican;* that is, such a refractory Person doth by his Contumacy put himself into the

Luke 10. 16.

Matt. 10. 40.

12. 17.

*Nec putent sibi vitæ aut salutis consistere rationem, si Episcopis & Sacerdotibus obtemperare noluerint; cum in Deuteron. Deus dicat, &c. Cypr. Ep. 61.*

Deut. 17. 12.

Num. 16. 11.

Hof. 4. 4.

*Quo exemplo ostenditur, & probatur obnoxios omnes & culpæ & pænæ futuros, qui se schismatici contra præpositos & sacerdotes irreligiosâ temeritate miscuerint. Cypr. Ep. 76.*

1 Cor. 16. 14.

Phil. 2. 14.

Rom. 12. 18.

2 Tim. 2. 22.

Heb. 12. 14.

Mark 9. 10.

*An esse sibi cum Christo videtur, qui adversus sacerdotes Christi facit? &c. Cypr. de Unit. Eccl. p. 258.*

State of one removed from the Commonwealth of Israel, he forfeiteth the special Protection of God, he becometh as an Alien, or an Outlaw from the Kingdom of our Lord.

Under the Mosaical Dispensation those who would do presumptuously, and would not hearken unto the Priest, that stood to minister before the Lord, did incur capital Punishment; those who factiously murmured against Aaron, are said to make an Insurrection against God, and answerably were punished in a miraculous Way.

(The Lord made a new thing, the earth opened, and swallowed them up; they went down alive into the pit.) It was in the Prophetical Times an Expression signifying height of Impiety; *My People is as those who strive with the Priest:* Seeing then God hath no less regard to his peculiar Servants now than he had then; seeing they no less represent him, and act by his Authority now, than any did then; seeing their Service is as precious to him, and as much tendeth to his Honour now, as the Levitical Service then did; seeing he no less loveth Order and

Peace in the Church, than he did in the Synagogue; we may well suppose it a no less heinous Sin, and odious to God, to despise the Ministers of Christ's Gospel, than it was before to despise the Ministers of Moses his Law.

It is a Sin indeed, pregnant with divers Sins, and involving the Breach of many great Commands, which are frequently proposed and pressed in the New Testament, with design in great Part to guard and secure it; *That of doing all things in charity, of doing all things without murmurings, and dissensions, of pursuing peace so far as lieth in us, of maintaining Unity, Concord, Unanimity in Devotion, of avoiding Schisms, and Dissensions, and the like;* which are all notoriously violated by this Disobedience; it includeth the most high Breach of Charity, the most formal infringing Peace, the most scandalous kind of Discord that can be, to cross our Superiours.

It is also a Practice issuing from the worst Dispositions of Soul, such as are most opposite to the Spirit of our Religion, and indeed very repugnant to common Reason and Humanity; from a proud Haughtiness, or vain Wantonness of Mind, from the irregularity of unmortified and unbridled Passion, from exorbitant Selfishness, (Selfishness of every bad kind, Self-conceit, Self-will, Self-interest) from turbulent Animosity, froward Crossness of Humour, rancorous Spite, perverse Obstinacy; from Envy, Ambition, Avarice, and the like ill Sources, the worst Fruits of the Flesh and corrupt Nature; to such Dispositions the rejecting God's Prophets of old, and the non-compliance with the Apostles are ascribed in Scripture; and from the same the like neglect of God's Messengers now do proceed; as who-



whoever will observe may easily discern; do but mind the Discourses of factious People, you shall perceive them all to breathe generally nothing but Ill-nature.

The Fruits also, which it produceth, are extremely bad; manifold great Inconveniencies and Mischiefs, hugely prejudicing the Interest of Religion, and the Welfare of the Church.

It is immediately and formally a Violation of Order and Peace; whence all the woful Consequences of Disorder and Faction do adhere thereto.

It breedeth great Disgrace to the Church, and Scandal to Religion; for what can appear more ugly than to see among the Professors of Religion, Children opposing their Fathers, Scholars contesting with their Masters, Inferiours slighting and crossing their Superiours? What can more expose the Church and Religion to the Contempt, to the Derision of *Atheists* and *Infidels*, of profane and lewd Persons, of wild *Hereticks* and *Schismaticks*, of all Enemies unto Truth and Piety, than such foul Irregularity?

It corrupteth the Minds and Manners of Men; for when that Discipline is relaxed, which was ordained to guard Truth, and promote Holiness; when Men are grown so licentious and stubborn, as to condemn their Superiours, to disregard their wholsom Laws and sober Advice, there can be no curb to restrain them; but down precipitantly they run into all kind of vicious Irregularities and Excesses; when those Mounds are taken away, whither will Men ramble; when those Banks are broken down, what can we expect but Deluges of impious Doctrine, and wicked Practice to overflow the ignorant and inconsiderate People?

Doth not indeed this Practice evidently tend to the Dissolution of the Church, and Destruction of Christianity? For when the *Shepherds* are (as to conduct and efficacy) *taken away*, will *not the sheep be scattered*, or *wander astray*, like *sheep without a shepherd*, being bewildred in various Errors, and exposed as a Prey to any wild Beasts; to the *grievous wolves*, to the *ravenous lions*, to the *wily Foxes*? Here a fanatical Enthusiast will snap them, there a profane Libertine will worry them, there again a desperate Atheist will tear and devour them.

Consult we but obvious Experience, and we shall see, what spoils and mines of Faith, of good Conscience, of common Honesty and Sobriety this Practice hath in a few Years caused: How have *Atheism* and *Infidelity*, how have Profaneness and Dissoluteness of Manners, how have all kinds of Dishonesty and Baseness grown up since Men began to disregard the Authority of their Spiritual Guides? What dismal Tragedies have we in our Age beheld acted upon this Stage of our own Country; What bloody Wars and Murthers (Murthers of *Princes*, of *Nobles*, of *Bishops* and *Priests*) what miserable Oppressions, Extortions and Rapines; what execrable Seditions and Rebellions; what barbarous Animosities and Feuds; what abominable Treasons, Sacrileges, Perjuries, Blasphemies; what horrible violations of all Justice and Honesty? And what I pray was the Source of these things? Where did they begin? Where, but at murmuring against, at rejecting, at persecuting the Spiritual Governours, at casting down and trampling on their Authority; at slighting and spurning at their Advice; surely would Men have observed the Laws, or have hearkned to the Counsels of those grave and sober Persons, whom God had appointed to direct them, they never would have run into the Commission of such Enormities.

It is not to be omitted, that in the present State of Things, the Guilt of Disobedience to spiritual Governours is encreased and aggravated by the supervenient Guilt of another Disobedience to the Laws of our Prince and Country; Before the Secular Powers (unto whom God hath committed the Dispensation of Justice, with the Maintenance of Peace and Order in reference to worldly Affairs) did submit to our Lord, and became *nursing Parents of the Church*, the Power of managing Ecclesiastical Matters did wholly reside in spiritual Guides; unto whom Christians, as the *peculiar Subjects* of God, were obliged willingly to yield Obedience; and refusing it, were guilty before God of spiritual Disorder, Faction, or Schism; but now after that political Authority (out of pious Zeal for God's Service, out of a wise Care to prevent the Influences of Disorder in spiritual Matters upon the Temporal Peace, out of grateful return for the Advantages the

Common-

Vide Cypr.  
Ep. 55. Neque  
enim aliunde,  
&c.

Inde Schismata, & Hæreses oborta  
sunt, & oriuntur, dum Episcopus, qui  
unus est, & Ecclesia præstet superbâ quo-  
rundam præsumptione contemnitur.  
Cypr. Ep. 69.

Hæc sunt initia Hæreticorum, & ortus  
atque conatus Schismaticorum malè co-  
gitantium ut sibi placeant, ut præposi-  
tum superbo tumore contemnant. Sic  
de Ecclesia receditur, sic altare profa-  
num foris collocatur, sic contra pacem  
Christi, atque unitatem Dei rebellatur.  
Cypr. Ep. 65.

Ecclesie gloria  
præpositi gloria  
est. Cypr. Ep.  
7. Ep. 55.

Matt. 26. 31.

Τὸ τοῦ πᾶντων τῶν κακῶν αἴτιον, ὅτι  
τὰ τῶν ἀρχόντων ἠκανόθεν, & ἐκ τῆς αἰδέας,  
& ἐκ τῆς φόβου, &c. Chryl. in 2. Tim. Or. 2.



Common-wealth enjoyeth from Religion, and the Church) hath pleased to back and fortifie the Laws of Spiritual Governours by civil Sanctions, the Knot of our Obligation is tied faster, its Force is redoubled, we by Disobedience incur a double Guilt, and offend God two ways, both as Supreme Governour of the World, and as King of the Church; to our Schism against the Church we add Rebellion against our Prince, and so become no less bad Citizens than bad Christians; Some may perhaps imagine their Disobedience hence more excusable, taking themselves now only thereby to transgress a political Sanction; but (beside that even that were a great Offence, the Command of our temporal Governours being sufficient, out of Conscience to God's express Will, to oblige us in all things not evidently repugnant to God's Law) it is a great Mistake to think the Civil Law doth anywise derogate from the Ecclesiastical; that doth not swallow this up, but succoureth and corroborateth it; their Concurrence yieldeth an accession of weight and strength to each; they do not by conspiring to prescribe the same thing either of them cease to be Governours as to right; but in efficacy the Authority of both should thence be augmented; seeing the Obligation to Obedience is multiplied upon their Subjects; and to disobey them is now two Crimes, which otherwise should be but one.

## SERMON XXVI.

### Of Obedience to our Spiritual GUIDES and GOVERNOURS.

H E B. XIII. 17.

*Obey them that have the rule over you.*

**S**UCH is the Nature of this Duty, and such are the Reasons enforcing the Practice thereof; I shall only farther remove two Impediments of that Practice; and so leave this Point.

Μάλιστα δὲ ἀπαρτὸν Χριστιανὸς ἐκ τῆς  
φύσεως ὡς ἐπὶ τὸν ἐκκλησιαστικὸν τὸν ἀμαρ-  
τανότοτον πλάσματα, &c. Chrys. de Sa-  
cerd. 2.

Ἐνταῦθα δὲ βιάζονται, ἀλλὰ πείθου-  
ντα δὲ ποιῶντα μέντω τὸ τοιοῦτον. Ibid.  
Matt. 20. 27. Luke 22. 26.

1 Pet. 5. 3.

1. One hindrance of Obedience is this, that spiritual Power is not Despotical, or Compulsory, but Parental or Pastoral; that it hath no external Force to abett it, or to avenge Disobedience to its Laws; they must not *κατακυριασθεῖν*, or *κατακυριεύειν* (be imperious, or domineer) they are not allowed to exercise Violence, or to inflict bodily Correction; but must rule in meek and gentle ways, directly influential upon the Mind and Conscience (ways of rational Persuasion, Exhortation, Admonition, Reproof) *in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; — convincing, rebuking, exhorting with all long-suffering, and Doctrine:* Their Word is their only Weapon, their Force of Argument all the Constraint they apply; hence Men commonly do not stand in awe of them, nor are so sensible of their Obligation to obey them; they cannot understand why they should be frightened by Words, or controlled by an unarmed Authority.

2 Tim. 2. 24.  
4. 2.  
1 Tim. 3. 3.

But this, in truth (Things being duly considered) is so far from diminishing our Obligation, or arguing the Authority of our Governours to be weak and precarious, that it rendreth our Obligation much greater, and their Authority more dreadful; for the sweeter and gentler their way of governing is, the more disingenuous and unworthy a Thing it is to disobey it; not to be persuaded by Reason, not to be allured by Kindness, not to admit friendly Advice, not to comply with



with the calmest Methods of furthering our own Good, is a brutish thing; he that only can be scared and scourged to Duty, scarce deserveth the Name of a Man: It therefore doth the more oblige us, that in this way we are moved to Action by Love rather than Fear: Yet if we would fear wisely and justly (not like Children, being frighted with formidable Shapes, and Appearances, but like Men apprehending the real Consequences of Things) we should the more fear these Spiritual Powers, because they are insensible: For that God hath commanded us to obey them, without assigning visible Forces to constrain or chastise, is a manifest Argument that he hath reserved the Vindication of their Authority to his own Hand, which therefore will be infallibly certain, and terribly severe; so the nature of the Case requireth, and so God hath declared it shall be; The Sentence that is upon Earth, pronounced by his Ministers upon contumacious Offenders, he hath declared himself ready to ratifie in Heaven, and therefore most assuredly will execute it: As under the old Law God appointed to the Transgression of some Laws, upon which he laid special Strefs, the Punishment of being cut off from his people; the Execution of which Punishment he reserved to himself, to be accomplished in his own way, and time; so doth he now in like manner take upon him to maintain the Cause of his Ministers; and to execute the Judgments decreed by them; and if so, we may consider that *it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*: Ecclesiastical Authority therefore is not a Shadow void of Substance or Force, but hath the greatest Power in the World to support and assert it; it hath Arms to maintain it most effectual and forcible (those of which St. Paul saith, *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God*—) it inflicteth Chastisements far more dreadful than any secular Power can inflict; for these only touch the Body, those pierce the Soul; these concern only our Temporal State, those reach Eternity it self; these at most yield a transitory Smart, or kill the Body, those produce endless Torment; and (utterly as to all Comfort in being) destroy the Soul.

Mat. 18. 18.

Heb. 10. 31.

2 Cor. 10. 4.

The Punishment for extream Contumacy is called *delivery to Satan*; and is not this far worse than to be put into the Hands of any Gaoler or Hangman? What are any Cords of Hemp, or Fetters of Iron in comparison to those Bands, of which 'tis said, *Whatever ye bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven*; which engage the Soul in a Guilt, never to be loosed, except by sore Contrition, and serious Repentance? What are any Scourges to St. Paul's Rod, lashing the Heart and Conscience with stinging Remorse; What any Axes or Faulchions to that sword of the spirit, which cutteth off a Member from the Body of Christ? What are any Faggots and Torches to that unquenchable fire and brimstone of the infernal Lake? What, in fine, doth any Condemnation here signifie to that horrible Curse, which devoreth an incorrigible Soul to the bottomless Pit?

Spirituali gla-

dio superbi &amp;

contumaces

necantur, dum

de Ecclesia e-

jiciuntur.

Cypr. Ep. 61.

It is therefore indeed a great Advantage to this Power that it is Spiritual.

2. Another grand Obstruction to the Practice of this Duty, is, Pretence to scruple about the Lawfulness, or Dissatisfaction in the Expedience of that which our Governours prescribe, that we are able to advance Objections against their Decrees, that we can espy Inconveniencies ensuing upon their Orders; that we imagine the Constitution may be reformed, so as to become more pure, more convenient and comely, more serviceable to Edification; that we cannot fance that to be best which they enjoy: For removing this Obstruction let me only propound some Questions.

Cypr. Ep. 50.

&amp; 52. (p. 97.)

Were not any Government appointed in vain, if such Pretences might exempt or excuse from Conformity to its Orders? Can such ever be wanting? Is there any Thing devisable, which may not be impugned by some plausible Reason, which may not disgust a squeamish Humour? Is there any Matter so clearly innocent, the Lawfulness whereof a weak Mind will not question, any thing so firm and solid, in which a small Acuteness of Wit cannot pick a Hole, any thing so indisputably certain, that whoever affecteth to cavil may not easily devise some Objections against it?

Φιλοῖσις οἷ-

νός ἐ λείπει,

ἐ δὲ φιλονεικία

μαχία. Socr.

hist. 7. 31.

Is there any thing here that hath no Inconveniencies attending it? Are not in all human Things, Conveniencies and Inconveniencies so mixt and complicated, that it is impossible to disentangle and sever them? Can there be any Constitution under Heaven so absolutely pure and perfect, that no Blemish or Defect shall appear therein? Can any Providence of Man foresee, any Care prevent, any Industry remedy all Inconveniencies possible? Is a Reformation satisfactory to all

Fancies



Fancies any-wise practicable; and are they not fitter to live in a *Platonick Idea* of a Common-wealth, than in any real Society who press for such an one? To be facile and complaisant in other Cases, bearing with Things which do not please us, is esteemed commendable, a courteous and human Practice, why should it not be much more reasonable to condescend to our Superiours, and comport with their Practice? Is it not very discourteous to deny them the Respect which we allow to others, or to refuse that Advantage to publick Transactions, which we think fit to grant unto private Conversation?

Οὐ μόνον δὲ ἀέκων (πολιτεία) δὲ  
δωρεάν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ δύναμις. Arist.  
Pol. 4. 1.

Si ubi jubeantur quarere singulis li-  
ceat; pereunte obsequio etiam imperium  
interdicit. Tac. 1. p. 450. Otho.

Are, I pray, the Objections against Obedience so clear, and cogent, as are the Commands which enjoin, and the Reasons which enforce it? Are the Inconveniences adhering to it apparently so grievous, as are the Mischiefs which spring from Disobedience? Do they in a just Balance counterpoize the Disparagement of Authority, the Violation of Order, the Disturbance of Peace, the Obstruction of Edification, which Disobedience produceth?

Dixisti sanè scrupulum tibi esse tollen-  
dum de animo, in quem incidisti; Inci-  
disti, sed tuâ credulitate irreligiosa, &c.  
Cypr. Ep. 69. (ad Florent.) vid. optime  
& appositè de hac re differentem.

To what Purpose did God institute a Government, if the Resolutions thereof must be suspended, till every Man is satisfied with them; or if its State must be altered so often as any Man can pick in it Matter of Offence or Dislike; or if the Proceedings thereof must be shaped according to the numberless Varieties of different and repugnant Fancies?

Do the *Scruples* (or *Reasons*, if we call them so) which we propound, amount to such a Strength and Evidence, as to out-weigh the Judgment of those whom God hath authorized by his Commission, whom he doth enable by his Grace to instruct and guide us? May not those, whose Office it is to

judge of such Things; whose Business it is to study for Skill in order to that purpose, who have most Experience in those Affairs, specially belonging to them, be reasonably deemed most able to judge both for themselves and us, what is lawful, and what expedient? Have they not Eyes to see what we do, and Hearts to judge concerning the Force of our Pretences, as well as we?

Qui fidei &  
veritati præ-  
sumit. Cypr.  
Ep. 72.

Is it not a Design of their Office to resolve our Doubts, and void our Scruples in such Cases, that we may act securely and quietly, being directed by better Judgments than our own? Are they not strictly obliged in Conscience, are they not deeply engaged by Interest to govern us in the best manner? Is it therefore Wisdom, is it Modesty, is it Justice for us to advance our private Conceits against their most deliberate publick Resolutions? May we not in so doing mistake; may we not be blind, or weak (not to say fond, or proud, or perverse) and shall those Defects or Defaults of ours evacuate so many Commands of God, and render his so noble, so needful an Ordinance quite insignificant?

Do we especially seem to be in earnest, or appear otherwise than illusively to palliate our naughty Affections, and sinister Respects, when we ground the Justification of our Non-conformity upon dark Subtilties, and intricate Quirks; which it is hard to conceive that we understand our selves, and whereof very perspicacious Men cannot apprehend the Force? Do we think we shall be innocent Men, because we are smart Sophisters; or that God will excuse us from our Duty, because we can perplex Men with our Discourses? Or that we are bound to do nothing, because we are able to say somewhat against all things.

Would we not do well to consider, what huge Danger they incur, and how massy a Load of Guilt they must undergo, upon whom shall be charged all those sad Disorders, and horrid Mischiefs which are naturally consequent on Disobedience; what if Confusion of Things, if Corruption of Manners; if Oppression of Truth, if Dissolution of the Church do thence ensue, what a Case then shall we be in, who confer so much thereto? Would not such Considerations be apt to beget Scruples far more disquieting an honest, and truly conscientious Mind, than any such either profound Subtilties, or superficial Plausibilities can do; which Dissenters are wont to alledge? For needeth he not to have extream Reason (Reason extreamly strong and evident) who dareth to refuse that Obedience, which God so plainly commandeth, by which his own Authority is maintained, on which the Safety, Prosperity, and Peace of the Church dependeth, in which the Support of Religion, and the Welfare of numberless Souls is deeply concerned?

Did,



Did, let me farther ask, the *Apostles*, when they settled Orders in the Church, when they imposed what they conceived needful for Edification, and Decency, when they inflicted spiritual Chastisements upon disorderly Walkers; regard such Pretences? Or had those self-conceited and self-willed People (who obeyed not their Words, but resisted and rejected them) no such Pretences? Had they nothing to think we, to say for themselves? Nothing to object against the Apostolick Orders, and Proceedings? They had surely; they failed not to find Faults in the Establishment, and to pretend a kind of tender Conscience for their Disobedience; yet this hinder'd not, but that the Apostles condemned their Mis-behaviour and inflicted severe Censures upon them.

Did not also the Primitive *Bishops* (and all Spiritual Governours down from the Beginning every where almost to these Days of Contention and Disorder) proceed in the same Course, not fearing to enact such Laws concerning indifferent Matters, and Circumstances of Religion, as seemed to them conducive to the Good of the Church? Did not all good People readily comply with their Orders, how painful soever, or disagreeable to Flesh and Blood, without Contest or Scruple? yet had not they as much Wit, and no less Conscience than our selves? They who had Wisdom enough to descry the Truth of our Religion through all the Clouds of Obloquy and Disgrace, which it lay under; who had Zeal and Constancy to bear the hardest Brunts of Persecution against it; were they such Fools as to see no Fault; so stupid as to resent nothing, or so loose as to comply with any thing? No surely; they were in truth so wise as to know their Duty, and so honest as to observe it.

If these Considerations will not satisfy, I have done; and proceed to the next Point of our Duty, to which the Precept in our Text may extend; concerning the Doctrine of our Guides: In which respect it may be conceived to imply the following Particulars, to be performed by us, as Instances, or Parts, or Degrees thereof.

I. We should readily and gladly address our selves to hear them; not out of profane and wilful Contempt, or slothful Negligence declining to attend upon their Instructions: There were of old those, of whom the *Prophets* complain, who would not so much as hearken to the Words of those whom God sent unto them; but stopped their Ears, *withdrew the shoulder, and hardened the neck, and would not hear*; there were those in the *Evangelical* times, who did ἀποδείναι τὸν λόγον, thrust away the word of God, judging themselves unworthy of eternal life; who would not admit, or hear the word of Life, and Overtures of Grace propounded by the *Apostles*; There were *Gadarenes*, who beseeched our Lord himself to depart from their Coasts; There have always been *deaf Adders*, who stop their ears to the voice of the Charmer, charm he never so wisely; No wonder then if now there be those, who will not so much as allow a Hearing to the Messengers of God, and the Guides of their Soul, some out of a factious Prejudice against their Office or their Persons, or their Way to shun them, giving themselves over to the Conduct of Seducers; some out of a profane Neglect of all Religion, out of being wholly possessed with worldly Cares, and Desires, out of Stupidity and Sloth (indisposing them to mind any thing that is serious) will not afford them any Regard: All these are extremely blameable, offensive to God, and injurious to themselves: It is a heinous Affront to God (implying a hostile Disposition toward him, an Unwillingness to have any Correspondence with him) to refuse so much as Audience to his Ambassadors; It is an interpretative Repulsing him; so of old he expressed it; *I, saith he, spake unto you, rising early, and speaking, but ye heard not; I called you, but ye answered not*; so under the Gospel, *He, saith our Lord, that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth (or regardeth not) you, despiseth me*; and, *We are Ambassadors of Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God*. It is a starving our Souls, depriving them of that Food, which God hath provided for them; It is keeping our selves at distance from any Means or Possibility of being well informed and quickned to the Practice of our Duty, of being reclaimed from our Errours and Sins; it is the Way to become hardened in Impiety, or sinking into a reprobate Sense: This is the first Step to Obedience; for how can we believe, except we hear? This is that which St. *James* urgeth; *Let every Man be quick to hear*; and, which St. *Peter* thus enjoineeth, *Like new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby*; We should especially be quick and ready to hear those,

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F f

whom

2 Tim. 4. 15.  
1 Tim. 1. 20.  
2 Thess. 3.  
14. 6.

Neh. 9. 29.  
Prov. 1. 24.  
Isa. 65. 12.  
66. 4.  
Jer. 7. 13.  
6. 10.  
Acts 13. 46.  
Mat. 10. 14.  
Luke 8. 37.

Psal. 58. 4, 5.

Jer. 7. 13.

Luke 10. 16.

2 Cor. 5. 20.

Jam. 1. 19.

1 Pet. 2. 2.



whom God hath authorized and appointed to speak; we should *desire to suck the milk of the word* from those, who are our spiritual Parents and Nurses.

2. We should hear them with serious, earnest Attention, and Consideration; so that we may well understand, may be able to weigh, may retain in Memory, and may become duly affected with their Discourses; We must not hear them drowsily and slightly, as if we were nothing concerned, or were hearing an impertinent Tale; their Word should not pass through the Ears, and slip away without effect; but sink into the Understanding, into the Memory, into the Heart; like the *good seed* falling into a *depth of earth*, able to afford it Root and Nourishment; therefore we must attend diligently thereto: *μεγαλυνειν δι' αυτην ημεται*, we should therefore give more abundant heed, as the Apostle saith, to the things we hear, lest at any time we should let them slip. This Duty the Nature and Importance of their Word requireth: *It is the word, not of men, but in truth the word of the great God*, (his Word as proceeding from him, as declaring his Mind and Will, as tending his Overtures of Grace and Mercy) which as such challengeth great Regard and Awe; It informeth us of our chief Duties, it furthereth our main Interests, it guideth us into, it urgeth us forward in the Way to eternal Happiness; 'tis the Word that is *able to save our souls*; to render us wise unto salvation; It therefore claimeth and deserveth from us most earnest Attention; it is a great Indignity and Folly not to yield it.

3. We should to their Instructions bring good Dispositions of Mind, such as may render them most effectual and fruitful to us: Such as are right Intention, Candour, Docility, Meekness.

We should not be induced to hear them out of Curiosity, (as *having itching ears*) being desirous to hear *some new things*, some fine Notions, some taking Discourse; somewhat to fantasie or talk pleasantly about; (as the *Athenians* heard *St. Paul*, not out of Censoriousness, or Inclination to criticize, and find fault (as the *Pharisees* heard our Saviour, *Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him*) not out of design to gratifie our Passions in hearing them, to reprove other Persons; or for any such corrupt and sinister Intention, but altogether out of pure Design that we may be improved in Knowledge, and excited to the Practice of our Duty.

We should not come to hear them with Minds imbued with ill Prejudices and partial Affections, which may obstruct the Virtue and Efficacy of their Discourse; or may hinder us from judging fairly and truly about what they say; but with such Freedom and Ingenuity as may dispose us readily to yield unto, and acquiesce in any profitable Truth declared by them; like the generous *Berens*, who *received the word μετ' αληθινου προθυμιας*, with all Alacrity and readiness of mind, *searching the Scriptures daily whether these things were so*; *ως ασηνιστα βηθη*, like *Infants newly born*, that come to the Dugg without any other Inclination than to suck what is needful for their Sustenance.

We should be docile and tractable; willing and apt to learn; shaking off all those Indispositions of Soul (all Dulness and Sluggishness, all Peevishness and Perverseness, all Pride and Self-conceitedness, all corrupt Affection and Indulgence, to our Conceits, our Humours, our Passions, our Lusts and inordinate Desires) which may obstruct our Understanding of the Word, our yielding Assent to it, our receiving Impression from it: There were those, concerning whom the *Apostle* said, that he could not proceed in his Discourse, because they were *ωδρεοι & αργοι*, *dull of hearing* (or sluggish in hearing) who were indisposed to hear, and incapable to understand, because they would not be at the Pains to rouse up their Fancies, and fix their Minds upon a serious Consideration of Things: There were those, who had a *spirit of slumber, eyes not to see, and ears not to hear*; who did hear with the ear, but not understand; *seeing did see, but not perceive*; for their heart had waxed gross, their ears were dull of hearing; and their eyes were closed; Such indocile Persons there always have been, who being stupified and perverted by corrupt Affections, became incapable of bettering from good Instruction: All such we should strive to free our selves from; that we may perform this Duty to our Guides, and *in meekness receive the ingrafted word*.

These Practices of hearing, of attending, of coming well-disposed to Instruction, are at least Steps and Degrees necessarily pre-requisite to the Obedience prescribed; and farther to press them all together upon us, we may consider that

it



it is strictly incumbent on them (under danger of heavy Punishment and *woe*) 1 Cor. 9. 16.  
*willingly, earnestly, with all Diligence and Patience to labour in teaching and ad-* 1 Cor. 5. 14.  
*monishing us; they must give attendance, and take heed unto their doctrine, that it* 1 Pet. 5. 2.  
*may be sound and profitable; they must preach the word, and be instant upon it in* Rom. 12. 3.  
*season, out of season, (that is, not only taking, but seeking and snatching all Oc-* 1 Tim. 5. 17.  
*casions to do it) reproving, rebuking, exhorting with all long-suffering, and doctrine;* 1 Tim. 4. 13.  
*they must warn every man, and teach every man in all wisdom, that they may present every* 2 Tim. 4. 2.  
*man perfect in Christ Jesus:* As they are obliged in such manner to do these things,  
 so there must be correspondent Duties lying upon us to receive their Doctrine  
 readily, carefully, patiently, sincerely and fairly: As they must be faithful Dis- 1 Cor. 4. 2.  
 pensers of God's heavenly Truth and holy Mysteries, so we must be obsequious  
 Entertainers of them: imposing such Commands on them doth imply reciprocal  
 Obligations in their Hearers and Scholars; otherwise their Office would be vain,  
 and their Endeavours fruitless; God no less would be frustrated in his Design than  
 we should be deprived of the Advantages of their Institution.

But farther, it is a more immediate Ingredient of this Duty, that,

4. We should effectually be enlightened by their Doctrine, be convinced by their  
 Arguments persuading Truth and Duty, be moved by their Admonitions and  
 Exhortations to good Practice: We should open our Eyes to the Light, which  
 they shed forth upon us; we should surrender our Judgment to the Proofs, which  
 they alledge; we should yield our Hearts and Affections pliable to their mollifying,  
 and warming Discourses: It is their Part to subdue our Minds to the obedience of  
 faith, and to subject our Wills to the Observance of God's Commandments (*Casting* 2 Cor. 10. 5.  
*down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth it self against the knowledge of*  
*God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*) It must  
 therefore answerably be our Duty not to resist, not to hold out, not to persist ob-  
 stinate in our Errours, or Prejudices; to submit our Minds to the Power of Truth,  
 being willingly and gladly conquered by it; it must be our Duty to subjugate our  
 Wills, to bend our Inclinations, to form our Affections to a free Compliance of  
 Heart with the Duties urged upon us; we should not be like those Disciples, of  
 whom our Lord complaineth thus: *O fools, and slow of heart, to believe all that the* Luke 24. 25.  
*prophets have spoken; nor like the Jews, with whom St. Stephen thus expostulates:* Acts 7. 51.  
*Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.* 1 Cor. 4. 20.  
 They should speak with Power and Efficacy; we therefore should not by our In- 2. 4.  
 dispositions (by Obstinacy of Conceit, or Hardness of Heart) obstruct their En-  
 deavours; they should be *co-workers of your joy* (that is, working in us that Faith 2 Cor. 1. 24.  
 and those Vertues, which are productive of true Joy and Comfort to us) we there- 1 Cor. 3. 5.  
 fore should co-work with them toward the same End; they should edifie us in  
 Knowledge and Holiness; we should therefore yield our selves to be fashioned and  
 polished by them.

5. We should, in fine, obey their Doctrine by conforming our Practice thereto;  
 this our Lord prescribed in regard even to the *Jewish* Guides and Doctors; *The*  
*Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses his seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe,* Mat. 23. 3.  
*that observe and do;* the same we may well conceive that he requireth in respect to  
 his own Ministers, the Teachers of a better Law, authorized to direct us by his own  
 Commission, and thereto more specially qualified by his Grace: This is indeed the  
 Crown and Completion of all; to hear signifieth nothing; to be convinced in  
 our Mind, and to be affected in our Heart will but aggravate our Guilt, if we  
 neglect Practice: Every Sermon we hear, that sheweth us our Duty will in effect  
 be an Indictment upon us, will ground a Sentence of Condemnation, if we  
 transgress it: For, as *The Earth which drinketh in the Rain that cometh oft upon it,* Heb. 6. 7, 8.  
*and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God,* 10. 26.  
*so that which beareth thorns and briars, is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, and its end*  
*is to be burned:* And, *not the hearers of the law are just with God, but the doers of the* Rom. 2. 13.  
*law shall be justified.* And it is a good Advice, that of St. James; *Be ye doers of the* Jam. 1. 22.  
*word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves;* 'tis, he intimateth, a Fallacy  
 some are apt to put upon themselves to conceit they have done sufficiently when  
 they have lent an Ear to the Word; this is the least Part to be done in regard to it,  
 Practice is all in all; what is it to be shewed the Way, and to know it exactly, if  
 we do not walk in it, if we do not by it arrive to our Journey's End, the Salva-  
 tion of our Souls? To have waited upon our Lord himself, and hung upon his



Discourse, was not available; for when in the Day of Accompt, some shall begin to alledge, *We have eaten, and drank before thee, and thou hast taught in our streets; Our Lord will say, I know ye not, whence ye are, depart from me all ye workers of Iniquity.* And, it is, our Lord's Declaration in the Case, *Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; but every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, that built his house upon the sand.*

Many are very earnest to hear, they hear gladly, as Herod did St. John Baptist's Homilies; they receive the word with joy, as the temporary believers in the Parable did: They do as those Men did in the Prophet, *delight to know God's ways, do ask of God the ordinances of justice, do take delight in approaching God; Or as those in another Prophet; Who speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord; And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people; and they hear thy words, but will not do them; for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness: And lo, thou art to them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an Instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not: They for a time rejoice in the light of God's messengers, as those Jews did in the Light of that burning and shining lamp, St. John the Baptist; but all comes to nothing; but they are backward and careless to perform, at least, more than they please themselves, or what suiteth to their Fancy, their Humour, their Appetite, their Interest: Many Hearers will believe only what they like, or what suiteth to their Prejudices and Passions; many of what they believe will practise that only which sorteth with their Temper, or will serve their Designs, they cannot conform to unpleasant and unprofitable Doctrines: Sometimes Care choaketh the Word, sometimes Temptation of Pleasure, of Profit, of Honour allureth, sometimes Difficulties, Hazards, Persecutions, discourage from Obedience to it.*

These Particulars are obvious, and by most will be consented to; there is one Point which perhaps will more hardly be admitted, which therefore I shall more largely insist upon: 'Tis this:

6. That as in all Cases it is our Duty to defer much Regard to the Opinion of our Guides, so in some Cases it behoveth us to rely barely upon their Judgment and Advice; those especially among them who excel in Dignity and Worth; who are approved for Wisdom and Integrity; their Definitions, or the Declarations of their Opinion (especially such as are exhibited upon mature Deliberation and Debate, in a solemn manner) are ever very probable Arguments of Truth and Expediency; they are commonly the best Arguments which can be had in some Matters, especially to the meaner and simpler sort of People. This upon many Accompts will appear reasonable.

It is evident to Experience, that every Man is not capable to judge, or able to guide himself in Matters of this Nature (concerning divine Truth and Conscience.) There are *Children in Understanding*, there are *Men weak in Faith* (or Knowledge concerning the Faith) there are *Idiots*, ἀνέγκει (Men not bad, but simple) Persons occupying the room of the unlearned, unskilful in the word of righteousness, who (as the Apostle saith) need that one should teach them which be the first principles of the oracles of God.

The Vulgar Sort of Men are as undiscerning and injudicious in all things, so peculiarly in Matters of this nature, so much abstracted from common Sense and Experience; whence we see them easily seduced into the fondest Conceits and wildest Courses by any slender Artifice or fair Pretence; like children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of Men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

There are also some particular Cases, a competent Information and Skill in which must depend upon some Improvements of Mind acquired by more than ordinary Study and Experience: So that in them most People do want sufficient Means of attaining Knowledge requisite to guide their Judgment, or their Practice: And for such Persons in such Cases it is plainly the best, the wisest, and the safest way to rely upon the Direction of their Guides, assenting to what they declare, acting what they prescribe, going whither they conduct.

The

Rom. 14. 1.

15. 1. &c.

Rom. 16. 18.

2 Cor. 14. 16.

3. 2. 8. 10.

Vulgo non ju-

dicium, non

veritas. Tac.

Ἀνεγκει δ

δύμω, M.

Ant. Eph. 4.

14.

Ἄν' εἰδότες ἰσχυρὰς εἰσὶν αἱ τὰς  
ἰσχυρὰς ἐκδοῦναι τεχνικαὶ ἐργασίαι, ἢ  
ἀλλοῦ ἰσχυροῦς αἱ ἀνεγκεινόμεναι, ἢ  
καὶ ἰσχυρὰς αἱ ἀνεγκεινόμεναι, ἢ  
καὶ ἰσχυρὰς αἱ ἀνεγκεινόμεναι. Naz. Or. 1.  
—fide calidum, & virtute robustum, &c.  
Cypr. Ep. 23. de Luciano.



The very Notion of Guides, and the Design of their Office doth import a difference of Knowledge, and a need of reliance upon them in such Cases; it signifieth that we are in some measure ignorant of the way, and that they better know it, and if so, plain Reason dictateth it fit that we should follow them; and indeed what need were there of Guides, to what Purpose should we have them, if we can sufficiently ken the way, and judge what we should do without them?

In the State of Learning (in which the assigning us Teachers supposeth us placed) whatever our Capacity may be, yet our Judgment at least (for want of a full Comprehension of Things, which must be discovered in order, and by degrees) is imperfect; in that State therefore it becometh us not to pretend Exercise of Judgment, but rather easily to yield Assent to what our Teachers, who see farther into the Thing, do assert; *The Learner (as Seneca saith) is bound to be ruled, while he beginneth to be able to rule himself.*

*Regi debet;  
dum incipit se  
posse regere.  
Sen. Ep. 94.*

*Δὲ μαθητὸς πρὸς τὸν διδάσκαλον, ὁ μαθητὴς ὀφείλει ἐν ᾧ τινὲς μετρίᾳ πιστὸς εἶναι;* *A Learner should in some measure be credulous; otherwise as he will often fail in his Judgment, so he will make little Progress in Learning; for if he will admit nothing on his Master's Word, if he will question all Things, if he will continually be doubting and disputing, or contradicting and opposing his Teacher, how can Instruction proceed? He that presently will be his own Master, is a bad Scholar, and will be a worse Master. He that will fly before he is fledged, no wonder if he tumble down.*

There are divers obvious, and very considerable Cases, in which Persons most contemptuous of Authority, and refractory toward their Guides, are constrained to rely upon the Judgment of others, and are contented to do it, their Conscience shewing them unable to judge for themselves; In admitting the literal Sense of Scripture according to Translations; in the Interpretation of difficult Places, depending upon the Skill of Languages, Grammar, and Criticism; upon the Knowledge of Human Arts and Sciences, upon Histories and ancient Customs; in such Cases all illiterate Persons (however otherwise diffident, and disregardful of Authority) are forced to see with the Eyes of other Men, to submit their Judgment to the Skill and Fidelity of their learned Guides, taking the very Principles and Foundations of their Religion upon Trust; And why then consonantly may they not do it in other Cases; especially in the Resolution of difficult, sublime, obscure and subtil Points, the Comprehension whereof transcendeth their Capacity?

## SERMON XXVII.

### Of Obedience to our Spiritual GUIDES and GOVERNOURS.

H E B. XIII. 17.

*Obey them that have the Rule over you.*

**B**UT farther,

The more to engage and incline us to the performing this Part of our Duty (the regarding, prizing, confiding in the Judgment of our Guides) we may consider the great Advantages, both natural and supernatural, which they have to qualifie them in order to such Purposes.

1. They may reasonably be presumed more intelligent and skilful in Divine Matters than others; for as they have the same natural Capacities and Endowments with others (or rather commonly somewhat better than others, as being de-



designed and selected to this sort of Employment) so their natural Abilities are by all possible means improved: It is their Trade and Faculty, unto which their Education is directed: in acquiring Ability toward which they spend their Time, their Care, their Pains; in which they are continually versed and exercised (*having, as the Apostle speaketh, by reason of use their senses exercised to discern both good and evil*) for which also they imploy their Supplications and Devotions to God.

Heb. 5. 14.

Many special Advantages they hence procure, needful or very conducive to a more perfect Knowledge of such Matters, and to Security from Errors; such as are conversing with Studies, which enlarge a Man's Mind, and improve his Judgment; a Skill of Disquisition about things of sifting and canvassing Points coming under Debate; of weighing the Force of Arguments, and distinguishing the Colours of Things; the Knowledge of Languages, in which the *Divine Oracles* are expressed, of Sciences, of Histories, of Practices serving to the Discovery and Illustration of the Truth, Exercise in Meditation, Reading, Writing, Speaking, Disputing and Conference, whereby the Mind is greatly enlightened, and the Reason strengthened, Acquaintance with Variety of Learned Authors, who with great Diligence have expounded the Holy Scriptures, and with most Accuracy discussed Points of Doctrine, especially with *Ancient Writers*, who living near the *Apostolical* times, and being immediately (or within few Degrees mediately) their Disciples, may justly be supposed most helpful toward informing us what was their genuine Doctrine, what the true Sense of their Writings: By such Means as in other Faculties, so in this of *Theology*, a competent Skill may be obtained; there is no other ordinary, or probable Way; and no extraordinary Way can be trusted, now that Men appear not to grow learned or wise by special Inspiration or Miracle; after that all Pretences to such By-ways have been detected of Imposture, and do smell too rank of Hypocrisie.

Since then our Guides are so advantageously qualified to direct us; it is in Matters difficult and doubtful (the which require good Measure of Skill and Judgment to determine about them) most reasonable that we should rely upon their Authority, preferring it in such Cases to our private Discretion; taking it for more probable, that they should comprehend the Truth than we (unassisted by them and judging merely by our own glimmering Light) can do; deeming it good Odds on the side of their Doctrine against our Opinion or Conjecture.

2 Tim. 2. 4.

They have also another peculiar Advantage toward judging sincerely of things, by their greater Retirement from the World, and Disengagement from secular Interests; the which ordinarily do deprave the Understandings, and pervert the Judgments of Men; disposing them to accommodate their Conceits to the *Maxims* of worldly Policy, or to the vulgar Apprehensions of Men: Many of which are false and base; by such Abstraction of Mind from worldly Affairs, together with fastning their Meditation on the best things, which their Calling necessarily doth put them, upon, more than is usual to other Men, they commonly get Principles and Habits of Simplicity and Integrity, which qualifie Men both to discern Truth better, and more faithfully to declare it.

Seeing then in every Faculty the Advice of the Skilful is to be regarded, and is usually relied upon; and in other Affairs of greatest Importance, we scruple not to proceed so; seeing we commit our Life and Health (which are most precious to us) to the *Physician*, observing his Prescriptions commonly without any Reason, sometimes against our own Sense; we entrust our Estate, which is so dear, with the *Lawyer*, not contesting his Advice; we put our Goods and Safety into the Hands of a *Pilot*, sleeping securely whilst he steereth us as he thinketh fit; seeing in many such Occasions of common Life we advisedly do renounce, or wave our own Opinions, absolutely yielding to the Direction of others; taking their Authority for a better Argument or ground of Action, than any which our Conceit,

Ὅτι δὲ ἡ γνώσις τῶν πραγμάτων  
ἐκ τῶν περὶ αὐτὰ λόγων ἐκτείνεται, καὶ τὰ  
ἀνθρώπων ὡς περὶ αὐτὰ λέγοντες. Xen. *Pæd.* I.  
Ἐν μὲν τῷ πρώτῳ περὶ αὐτῶν δὲ τῶν  
θεσπεσιῶν, ἐν δὲ τῷ ἑνὶ τῶν λογισμῶν, δὲ  
ναυτικῶν βέλτιον. Aristonymus apud Stob.  
Tom. 2. Tit. 3.

or a bare Consideration of the Matter can suggest to us; admitting this *Maxim* for good, that it is a more adviseable and safe Course in Matters of Consequence to follow the Judgment of wiser Men than to adhere to our own Apprehensions: Seeing it is not Wisdom (as every Man thinks) in a doubtful Case to act upon Disadvantage, or to venture upon odds against himself, and it is plainly doing thus to Act upon our own Opinion, against the Judgment of those who are more improved in the Way, or better studied in the Point



Point than our selves; seeing in other Cases these are the common and approved Apprehensions and Practices; and seeing in this Case there is plainly the same Reason, for that there are Difficulties and Intricacies in this no less than in other Faculties, which need good Skill to resolve them; for that in these Matters we may easily slip, and by Error may incur huge Danger and Damage; why then should we not here take the same Course, following (when no other clearer Light, or prevalent Reason occurreth) the Conduct and Advice of our more skilful Guides? Especially considering, that beside ordinary, natural and acquired Advantages, they have other supernatural, both Obligations to the well-discharging this Duty, and Assistances toward it: For,

2. We may consider, That they are by God appointed, and empowered to instruct and guide us: It is their special Office, not assumed by themselves, or constituted by human Prudence, but ordained and settled by divine Wisdom for our Edification in Knowledge, and Direction in Practice: They are God's Messengers purposely sent by him, selected and separated, by his Instinct, *for this work*; they are by him given *for the perfecting of the Saints, and edifying the body of Christ*: It is by God's Warrant, and in his Name that they speak, which giveth especial Weight to their Words, and no mean ground of Assurance to us in relying upon them: For who is more likely to know God's Mind and Will, who may be presumed more faithful in declaring them, than God's own Officers, and Agents? Those whose great Duty, whose main Concernment it is to speak not their own Sense, but the Word of God? They are God's Mouth, by whom alone, ordinarily, he expresseth his Mind and Pleasure; by whom *he entreateth us to be reconciled* in Heart and Practice to him; what they say therefore is to be received as God's Word, except plain Reason, upon due Examination, do forbid.

If they by Office are Teachers, or Masters in Doctrine, then we answerably must in Obligation be Disciples, which implies admitting their Doctrine, and proficiency in Knowledge thereby; If they are appointed Shepherds, then must we be their Sheep, to be led and fed by them; if they are God's Messengers, we must yield some Credence, and embrace the Message uttered by them; so the Prophet telleth us: *The Priest's Lips should keep Knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his Mouth, for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts*; so the Law of old enjoined, *According to the sentence of the Law, which they shall teach thee, and according to the Judgment, which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do; thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee to the right hand, nor to the left*; so our Lord also in regard to the Scribes and Pharisees saith, *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses his Chair, all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do*; upon account of their Office, whatever they direct to (not repugnant to the divine Law) was to be observed by the People; and surely in doubtful Cases, when upon competent inquiry no clear light offereth it self, it cannot be very dangerous to follow their Guidance, whom God hath appointed and authorized to lead us; if we err doing so, we err wisely in the Way of our Duty, and so no great Blame will attend our Error.

3. We may consider that our Guides, as such, have special Assistance from God; to every Vocation God's Aid is congruously afforded; but to this (the principal of all others, the most important, most nearly related to God, and most peculiarly tending to his Service) it is in a special Manner most assuredly and plentifully imparted.

They are *stewards of God's various grace*; and they who dispense Grace to others cannot want it themselves; they are *co-operatours with God*, and God consequently doth co-operate with them; it is God who doth *ingrāv*, render them sufficient to be *ministers of the New Testament*; and they minister of the ability which God supplieth; Every spiritual Labourer is obliged to say with St. Paul; *By the grace of God I am what I am—I have laboured, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me*.

God's having given them (as St. Paul saith) to the Church, doth imply that God hath endowed them with special Ability, and furthereth them (in their conscionable Discharge of their Ministry) with aid requisite to the Designs of *perfecting the Saints and edifying the Body* in Knowledge in Vertue, in Piety.

As the Holy Ghost doth constitute them in their Charge (according to that of St. Paul in the Acts; *Take heed unto your selves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy*

Jer. 3. 15. *I will give you Pastors according to mine Heart, which shall feed you with Knowledge and Understanding.*  
Cypr. Ep. 55.

Rom. 10. 15.  
Acts 13. 2.  
Eph. 4. 11, 12.  
1 Cor. 12. 28.  
1 Tim. 1. 11.  
12. 2. 7.  
Tit. 1. 3.  
1 Thess. 2. 4.

2 Cor. 5. 20.

Mal. 2. 7.

Deut. 17. 11.

Matt. 23. 3.

(Eze. 34. 16.)

1 Pet. 4. 10.

1 Cor. 3. 9.

2 Cor. 3. 5.

Phil. 2. 13.

1 Pet. 4. 11.

1 Cor. 15. 10.

Eph. 4. 11, 12.

1 Cor. 12. 28.

Acts 20. 28.

Holy



*Holy Ghost hath made you overseers*) so questionless he doth enable and assist them in administering their Function. There is a *gift* (of spiritual Ability, and divine Succour) imparted by their Consecration to this Office, with *the laying on the hands of the presbytery*, joined with humble Supplications for them, and solemn Benedictions in God's Name upon them. The divine Spirit, which *distributeth, as he seeth good, unto every member of the church* needful Supplies of Grace, doth bestow on them in competent measure the *word of wisdom*, and the *word of knowledge* requisite for their Employment.

God of old did in extraordinary Ways visibly communicate his Spirit unto his Prophets and Agents; the same he did liberally pour out upon the *Apostles* and first Planters of the *Gospel*; the same questionless he hath not withdrawn from those, who under the *Evangelical* Dispensation which is peculiarly the *ministration of the Spirit*, (unto which the Aid of God's Spirit is most proper and most needful) do still by a settled Ministry supply the room of those extraordinary Ministers; but imparteth it to them, in a Way although more ordinary and occult, yet no less real and effectual, according to Proportions answerable to the Exigencies of Need and Occasion; And by the Influence hereof upon the Pastours of his Church it is, that our Lord accomplisheth his Promise to be *with it until the end of the world*.

*Clavis scientia*, the key of knowledge spiritual, is one of those Keys which he hath given to them, whereby they are enabled to open the Kingdom of Heaven.

Great Reason therefore we have to place an especial Confidence in their Direction; for whom can we more safely follow, than those, whom (upon such grounds of divine Declarations and Promises) we may hope that God doth guide; so that consequently in following them we do in effect follow God himself? *He that heareth you, heareth me*, might be said not only because of their relation unto Christ; but because their Word proceedeth from his Inspiration, being no other than his Mind conveyed through their Mouth.

4. We may also for our Encouragement to confide in our Guides, consider, that they are themselves deeply concerned in our being rightly guided; their present Comfort, their Salvation hereafter depending upon the faithful and careful Discharge of their Duty herein: they must render an Accompt for it; so that if by their wilful, or negligent Miscarriage we do fall into dangerous Errour or Sin, they do thence not only forfeit rich and glorious Rewards (assigned to those, *who turn many unto righteousness*) but incur woful Punishment; this doth assure their Integrity, and render our Confidence in them very reasonable; for as we may safely trust a Pilot, who hath no less Interest than our selves in the safe Conveyance of the Vessel to Port; so may we reasonably confide in their Advice, whose Salvation is adventured with ours in the same bottom, or rather is wrapped up, and carried in ours: It is not probable they will (at least designedly) misguide us to their own extreme Damage, to their utter Ruin: *If they do not warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his Life, God hath said that he will require his Blood at their hands*; and is it likely they should wittingly run such a hazard, that they should purposely cast away the Souls, for which they are so certainly accountable? It is our *Apostle's* enforcement of the Precept in our Text, *Obey them that guide you; for they watch for your Souls, as they that must give an accompt*; which Argumentation is not only grounded upon the Obligations of Ingenuity and Gratitude; but also upon Considerations of Discretion and Interests, we should obey our Guides in Equity and Honesty; we may do it advisedly, because they in regard to their own Accompts at the final Judgment are obliged to be careful for the Good of our Souls.

Upon these Considerations it is plainly reasonable to follow our Guides in all Matters, wherein we have no other very clear and certain Light of Reason or Revelation to conduct us: The doing so is indeed (which is farther observable) not only wise in it self, but safe in way of Prevention, that we be not seduced by other treacherous Guides; it will not only secure us from our own weak Judgments, but from the Frauds of those *who lie in wait to deceive*. The simpler sort of Men will in effect be always led not by their own Judgment, but by the Authority of others; and if they be not fairly guided by those whom God hath constituted and assigned to that end, they will be led by the Nose by those who are concerned to seduce them: So Reason dictateth that it must be, so Experience sheweth it ever to have been, that the People, whenever they have deserted their true Guides, have



have soon been hurried by Impostors into most dangerous Errours, and extravagant Follies; being *carried about with divers and strange Doctrines*; being *like Children tossed to and fro with every wind of Doctrine.* Heb. 13. 9. Eph. 4. 14.

It is therefore a great Advantage to us, and a great Mercy of God, that there are (by God's Care) provided for us such Helps, upon which we may commonly for our guidance in the Way to Happiness more safely rely, than upon our own Judgments, liable to Mistake, and than upon the Counsel of others, who may be interested to abuse us; very foolish and very ungrateful we are, if we do not highly prize, if we do not willingly embrace this Advantage.

I farther add, that as Wisdom may induce, so Modesty and Humility should dispose us to follow the direction of our Guides: *Ye younger (saith St. Peter) submit your selves unto the Elder* (that is, ye Inferiours to your Superiours, ye that are the Flock to your Pastours) *and (subjoineth he immediately) be cloathed with Humility*; signifying, that it is a Point of Humility to yield that Submission: Every modest and humble Person is apt to distrust his own, and to submit to better Judgments: And, *Not to lean to our Understanding, not to be wise in our own Eyes; not to seem to know any thing, not to seem any body to ones self, in humility to prefer others before our selves*, are divine Injunctions, chiefly applicable to this Case, in reference to our spiritual Guides; for if it be Pride or culpable Immodesty to presume our selves wiser than any Man, what is it then to prefer our selves in that respect before our Teachers; as indeed we do, when without evident reason we disregard, or dissent from their Opinion? Prov. 3. 5, 7. Rom. 12. 6, 10. Gal. 6. 3. Phil. 2. 3. 1 Cor. 8. 2. 1 Tim. 6. 6.

It is then a Duty very reasonable, and a very commendable Practice to rely upon the guidance of our Pastors in such Cases, wherein surer direction faileth, and we cannot otherwise fully satisfie our selves.

Neither in doing so (against some appearances of Reason, or with some violence to our private Conceits) do we act against our Conscience, but rather truly according to it; for Conscience (as the Word in this Case is used) is nothing else but an Opinion in Practical Matters, grounded upon the best Reason we can discern; if therefore, in any Case, the Authority of our Guides be a Reason outweighing all other Reasons apparent, he that in such a Case, notwithstanding other Arguments less forcible, doth conform his Judgment and Practice thereto, therein exactly followeth Conscience; yea, in doing otherwise, he would thwart and violence his own Conscience, and be self-condemned, adhering to a less probable Reason in Opposition to one more probable.

I do not hereby mean to assert, that we are obliged indifferently (with an implicit Faith or blind Obedience) to believe all that our Teachers say, or to practise all they bid us: For they are Men, and therefore subject to Error and Sin; they may neglect or abuse the Advantages they have of knowing better than others; they may sometimes by Infirmary, by Negligence, by Pravity fail in performing faithfully their Duty towards us: They may be swayed by Temper, be led by Passion, be corrupted by Ambition or Avarice, so as thence to embrace and vent bad Doctrines: We do see our Pastors often dissenting and clashing among themselves, sometimes with themselves, so as to change and retract their own Opinions.

We find the Prophets of old complaining of Priests, of Pastors, of Elders, and Prophets, who handled the Law, yet were ignorant of God; who erred in Vision, and stumbled in Judgment; who were profane, brutish, light, and treacherous Persons; who polluted the Sanctuary, and did violence to the Law, and profaned holy Things; who handled the Law, yet knew not God; from whom the Law and Counsel did perish; who taught for Hire, and divined for Money; who themselves departed out of the way, and caused many to stumble, and corrupted the Covenant of Levi; who destroyed and scattered the Sheep of God's Pasture.

There were in our Saviour's Time Guides, of the ferment of whose Doctrine good People were bid to beware; who transgressed and defeated the Commandment of God by their Traditions; who did take away the key of Knowledge, so that they would not enter themselves into the Kingdom of Heaven, nor would suffer others to enter; blind Guides, who both themselves did fall, and drew others into the Ditch of noxious Error, and

Isa. 3. 12. *O my People, they which lead thee, cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths,*

(Jer. 2. 8.) Isa. 28. 7. Jer. 10. 21. 12. 10. Jer. 23. 11. (Jer. 18. 18. 5. 31. 6. 13.) Zeph. 3. 4.

Ezek. 22. 26. Mal. 1. 6. Ezek. 7. 26. Mic. 3. 11. Mal. 2. 8. 9. Jer. 23. 11. 12. 10. Mat. 16. 6, 12. Luke 12. 1. Mat. 15. 2, 6. Luke 11. 52. Mat. 15. 14.



Matt. 15. 9. and wicked Practice: The followers of which Guides did in vain worship God, ob-  
serving for Doctrine the Precepts of Men.

There have not, since the primitive Times of the Gospel, wanted those who (indulging to Ambition, Avarice, Curiosity, Faction, and other bad Affections) have depraved and debased Religion with noxious Errors, and idle Superstitions; such as St. Bernard describeth, &c.

Vid. Apol.  
Eccl. Ang.

We are, in Matters of such infinite Concernment to our eternal Welfare, in Wisdom and Duty obliged, not only without farther Heed or Care, to trust the Diligence and Integrity of others, but to consider and look about us, using our own Reason, Judgment, and Discretion, so far as we are capable; we cannot in such a Case be blamed for too much Circumspection and Caution.

We are not wholly blind, not void of Reason; not destitute of fit Helps; in many Cases we have competent Ability to judge, and Means sufficient to attain Knowledge; we are therefore concerned to use our Eyes, to employ our Reason, to embrace and improve the Advantages vouchsafed us.

We are accountable personally for all our Actions as agreeable or cross to Reason; if we are mistaken by our own Default, or misled by the ill guidance of others, we shall however deeply suffer for it, and die in our iniquity; the Ignorance, or Errour of our Guides will not wholly excuse us from Guilt, or exempt us from Punishment; it is fit therefore that we should be allowed, as to the sum of the Matter, to judge and chuse for our selves: For if our Salvation were wholly placed in the Hands of others, so that we could not but in Case of their Errour or Default miscarry: Our Ruin would be inevitable, and consequently not just; we should perish without Blame, if we were bound as a blind and brutish Herd, to follow others.

We, in order to our Practice (which must be regulated by Faith and Knowledge) and toward preparing our selves for our grand Accompt, are obliged to get a Knowledge and Perswasion concerning our Duty; to prove (or search and examine) what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God; for Ignorance (if any wise by our Endeavour vincible) will not secure us: He that (saith our Lord and Judge) knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes (few; not in themselves, but comparatively to those, which shall be inflicted on them, who transgress against Knowledge and Conscience.)

We are bound to study Truth, to improve our Minds in the Knowledge and Love of it, to be firmly persuaded of it in a rational Way; so that we be not easily shaken or seduced from it.

The Apostles do charge it upon us, as our Duty and Concernment; that we abound in faith and knowledge; that we be rooted and built up in Christ, and stablished in the faith, so as to be steadfast and unmovable, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled; to grow up and increase in all divine knowledge; that the word of God should dwell richly in us in all wisdom; that we should be filled with all knowledge, so as to be able, to teach, and admonish one another; that our love should abound more and more in knowledge and all judgment, that we may approve things excellent (or scan things different) that we be enriched in all the word, that is, (in all the Doctrine of the Gospel) and in all knowledge; that we be filled in the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that we should not be unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is; That we should be perfect and compleat in all the will of God (that is, first, in the Knowledge of it; then in Compliance with it) that in understanding we should not be children, but perfect men.

We are likewise by them commanded to take heed of false Prophets, to try the spirits, whether they are of God, to see that no man deceive us; to look that no man spoil us by vain deceit, to try all things, and hold fast that which is good; which Precepts imply that we should be furnished with a good Faculty of Judgment and competent Knowledge in the principal Matters of Christian Doctrine, concerning both Mysteries of Faith, and Rules of Practice. Our Lord himself and his Apostles did not upon other Terms than of rational Consideration and Discussion exact Credit and Obedience to their Words, they did not insist barely upon their own Authority, but exhorted their Disciples to examine strictly, and judge faithfully concerning the Truth and Reasonableness of their Doctrine: Search the Scriptures; for they testify of me: If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe me not, believe the works: So our Lord appealed to their Reason, pro-

John 5. 39.  
John 10. 37.  
38. 15. 22.  
24. 12. 48.



proceeding upon grounds of Scripture, and common Sense: And, *I speak to wise men, judge ye what I say*; so St. Paul addressed his Discourse to his Disciples; otherwise we should be incapable to observe them. 1 Cor. 10. 15.

We are also bound to defer the principal Regard to God's Wisdom and Will, so as without Reservation or Exception, to embrace whatever he doth say, to obey what he positively doth command: Whatever Authority doth contradict his Word, or cross his Command, in such Cases we may remonstrate with the Apostles, *If it be just before God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye*: And, *we ought to obey God rather than men*; We may denounce with St. Paul, *If an Angel from heaven preach any other Gospel, let him be accursed*. Acts 4. 19. Acts 5. 29. Gal. 1. 8.

We are obliged always to act with Faith (that is, with a Perswasion concerning the Lawfulness of what we do) for *Whatever is not of Faith is sin: We should never condemn our selves in what we try or embrace*. Rom. 14. 23. Rom. 14. 22.

These Things considered, we may, and it much behoveth us, reserving due Respect to our Guides, with Humility and Modesty to weigh and scan their Dictates and their Orders; lest by them unawares we be drawn into Errour or Sin; like the ingenuous Bereans, who did *ἀναλυσεν τοὺς γράμματα*, Search and examine the Scriptures if those things were so. Our Guides are but the helpers, they are not Lords of our Faith; the Apostles themselves were not. Acts 17. 11. 2 Cor. 1. 24.

We may, and are bound, if they tell us Things evidently repugnant to God's Word, or to sound Reason and common Sense, to dissent from them; if they impose on us Things evidently contrary to God's Law, to forbear Compliance with them; we may in such Cases appeal *ad legem & testimonium*; we must not admit a *non obstante* to God's Law. Isa. 8. 20. Plebs timens Dominum separare se debet a peccatore praecepto. Cyr.

If other Arguments (weighed in the Balance of honest and impartial Reason, with cautious and industrious Consideration) do overpoize the Authority of our Guides; let us in God's Name adhere to them; and follow our own Judgments; it would be a Violation of our Conscience, a Prevarication toward our own Souls, and a Rebellion against God to do otherwise; when against our own Mind, so carefully informed, we follow the Dictates of others, we like Fools rashly adventure and prostitute our Souls.

This Proceeding is no wise inconsistent with what we delivered before; for this due Wariness in examining, this Reservation in assenting, this Exception in Practice, in some Cases, wherein the Matter hath Evidence, and we a Faculty to judge, doth no-wise hinder, but that we should defer much Regard to the Judgment of our Guides; that we should in those Cases, wherein no Light discovereth it self out-shining their Authority, rely upon it; that where our Eyes will not serve clearly to direct us, we should use theirs; where our Reason faileth to satisfy us, we should acquiesce in theirs; that we should regard their Judgments so far, that no petty Scruple emerging, no feint Semblance of Reason should prevail upon us to dissent from their Doctrine, to reject their Advice, to disobey their Injunctions.

In fine, Let us remember, that the Mouth of Truth which bid us *to beware of the bad doctrine of those who sat in Moses's Chair, did also charge us to observe all they taught and enjoined*; that is, all not certainly repugnant to the Divine Law. In effect, if we disscost from the Advices of our sober Teachers appointed for us by God; we shall in the end have Occasion to bewail with him in the Proverbs, *How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof? And have not obeyed the voice of my Teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me?* Matt. 15. 14. Prov. 5. 12, 13.

To these Things I shall only add one Rule, which we may well suppose comprised in the Precept we treat upon; which is, that at least we forbear openly to dissent from our Guides, or to contradict their Doctrine; except only, if it be not so false (which never, or rarely can happen among us) as to subvert the Foundations of Faith, or Practice of Holiness. If we cannot be internally convinced by their Discourses, if their Authority cannot sway with us against the prevalence of other Reasons, yet may we spare outwardly to oppose them, or to slight their Judgment; for doing thus doth tend as to the Disgrace of their Persons, so to the Disparagement of their Office, to an obstructing the efficacy of their Ministry, to the infringement of Order and Peace in the Church: For when the inconsiderate



People shall see their Teachers distrusted and disrespected; when they perceive their Doctrine may be challenged, and opposed by plausible Discourses; then will they hardly trust them, or comply with them in Matters most certain and necessary; than which Disposition in the People there cannot happen any thing more prejudicial or baneful to the Church.

But let thus much serve for the Obedience due to the Doctrine of our Guides: Let us consider that which we owe to them in reference to their Conversation and Practice.

The following their Practice may well be referr'd to this Precept; for that their Practice is a kind of living Doctrine, a visible Law or Rule of Action; and because indeed the Notion of a Guide primarily doth imply Example; that he which is guided should respect the Guide as a Precedent, being concerned to walk after his Footsteps.

Most of the Reasons which urge Deference to their Judgment in teaching, do in Proportion infer Obligation to follow their Example (which indeed is the most easie and clear way of Instruction to vulgar Capacity; carrying with it also most efficacious Encouragement and Excitement to Practice:) They are obliged, and it is expected from them to live with especial Regularity, Circumspection, and Strictness of Conversation; they are by God's Grace especially disposed and enabled to do so; and many common Advantages they have of doing so; (a more perfect Knowledge of Things, Firmness of Principles, and Clearness of Notions; a deeper Tincture, and more favourable Relish of Truth, attained by continual Meditation thereon; consequently a Purity of Mind and Affection, a Retirement from the World and its Temptation, Freedom from Distraction of worldly Care, and the Incumbrances of Business, with the like.)

They are often charged to be exemplary in Conversation (as we before shewed) and that involveth a correspondent Obligation to follow them. They must (like *St. John Baptist*) be burning and shining lights; stars in God's right hand; lights of the world; whose light should shine before men, that men may see their good works; and by their Light direct their Steps.

John 5. 35.  
Apoc. 16. 20.  
Mat. 5. 14, 16.

They are proposed as Copies, which signifies, that we must in our Practice transcribe them.

We are often directly commanded to imitate them; *ὡς μιμηταὶ τῆς πίστεως*, whose faith imitate ye (that is, their faithful Perseverance in the Doctrine and Practice of Christianity) saith the *Apostle* in this Chapter.

Their Conversation is safely imitable in all Cases, wherein no better Rule appeareth, and when it doth not appear discordant from God's Law, and the Dictates of sound Reason; for supposing that Discordance, we cease to be obliged to follow them; as when our Lord prescribeth in respect to the Pharisees; *Whatever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not after their Works; for they say and do not.*

Matt. 23. 3.

It is indeed easier for them to speak well than to do well; their Doctrine therefore is more commonly a sure Guide than their Practice; yet when there wanteth a clearer guidance of Doctrine, their Practice may pass for instructive; and a probable Argument or Warrant of Action.

SERMON



# SERMON XXVIII.

## Of SELF-LOVE in general.

2 TIM. III. 1.

*For Men shall be lovers of themselves.*

**S**AIN**T** Paul in this Place out of a propheticall Spirit instructing or warning his Disciple *Timothy*, concerning *difficult times*, or the calamitous State of Things which should ensue; induced upon the World, as it useth to happen, by a general Prevalency of vicious Dispositions and Practices among Men, doth thence take Occasion by a Specification of their Vices to characterize the Persons, who should concur to produce that hard State.

Among those Vices he placeth Self-love in the Van, as the capital and leading Vice; intimating thereby, that it is of all in its nature most heinous, or in its influence most noxious.

*Hec omnia mala ab eo velut fonte manantia, quod primum posuit seipsum amantem. August. in Joh. Tract. 123.*

This indeed is of all Vices the most common, so deeply radicated in our Nature, and so generally over-spreading the World, that no Man thoroughly is exempted from it, most Men are greatly tainted with it, some are wholly possessed and acted by it; this is the Root, from which all other Vices do grow, and without which hardly any Sin could subsist; the chief Vices especially have an obvious and evident Dependence thereon.

All Impiety doth involve a Loving our selves in undue manner and measure; so that we set our selves in our Esteem and Affection before God; we prefer our own Conceits to his Judgment and Advice; we raise our Pleasure above his Will and Authority; we bandy Forces with him, and are like the prophane *Belsazzar*, of whom it is said, *Thou hast lifted up thy self against (or above) the Lord of Heaven.*

From hence particularly by a manifest extraction, are derived those chief and common Vices, Pride, Ambition, Envy, Avarice, Intemperance, Injustice, Uncharitableness, Peevishness, Stubbornness, Discontent and Impatience. For,

We over-value our selves, our Qualities and Endowments, our Powers and Abilities, our Fortunes and external Advantages; hence are we so proud, that is, so lofty in our Conceits, and fastuous in our Demeanour.

We would be the only Men, or most considerable in the World; hence are we ambitious, hence continually with unsatiable Greediness we do affect and strive to procure Encrease of Reputation, of Power, of Dignity.

We would engross to our selves all Sorts of good Things in highest Degree; hence enviously we become jealous of the Worth and Vertue, we grudge and repine at the Prosperity of others; as if they defalked somewhat from our Excellency, or did eclipse the Brightness of our Fortune.

We desire to be not only full in our Enjoyment, but free and absolute in our Dominion of Things; not only secure from needing the Succour of other Men, but independant in regard to God's Providence; hence are we so covetous of Wealth, hence we so eagerly scrape it, and so carefully hoard it up.

We can refuse our dear Selves no Satisfaction, although unreasonable or hurtful; therefore we so readily gratifie sensual Appetites in unlawful or excessive Enjoyments of Pleasure.

Being blinded or transported with fond Dotage on our selves, we cannot discern, or will not regard what is due to others; hence are we apt upon Occasion to do them wrong.

Love



Love to our selves doth in such manner suck in and swallow our Spirits, doth so pinch in and contract our Hearts, doth according to its computation so confine and abridge our Interests, that we cannot in our Affection, or in real Expression of Kindness tend outwards; that we can afford little Good-will, or impart little Good to others.

Deeming our selves extremely wise and worthy of Regard, we cannot endure to be contradicted in our Opinion, or crossed in our Humour; upon any such Occasion our Choler riseth, and easily we break forth into violent Heats of Passion.

From the like Causes it is, that we cannot willingly stoop to due Obedience of our Superiours, in Reverence to their Persons, and Observance of their Laws; that we cannot contentedly acquiesce in the Station or Portion assigned us by Providence; that we cannot patiently support our Condition, or accept the Events befalling us.

In fine, if surveying all the several Kinds of naughty Dispositions in our Souls, and of Miscarriages in our Lives, we do scan their particular Nature, and search into their original Causes; we shall find inordinate Self-love to be a main Ingre-

*Est ergo ista ad peccandum amore sui propensio, peccatum originale, Sc. Zuīng. apud Bell. de Amiff. grat. 4. 2.*

dient, and a common Source of them all: So that a *Divine* of great Name had some Reason to affirm, that *Original Sin* (or that innate Distemper from which Men generally become so very prone to Evil, and averse to Good) doth consist in

Self-love, disposing us to all kinds of Irregularity and Excess: *St. Paul* therefore might well set this in the Front of all those Sins, which depraved the Age he spake of; they having all such a Dependence on it.

It is therefore very requisite that we should well understand this Fault, that we may be the better able to curb and correct it; to which Purpose I shall endeavour, by God's help, somewhat to declare its Nature.

The Word *Self-love* is ambiguous; for all Self-love is not culpable; there is a necessary and unavoidable, there is an innocent and allowable, there is a worthy and commendable Self-love.

There is a Self-love, originally implanted by God himself in our Nature, in order to the Preservation and Enjoyment of our Being; the which is common to us with all Creatures, and cannot any-wise be extirpated; for *No man* (as *St. Paul* saith) ever yet hated his own Flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it: Every Man living,

*Panis ematur, olus, vini sextarius; adde Lucis humana sibi doleat natura negati. Hor. Serm. 1. 1.*

by a natural and necessary instinct, is prompted to guard his Life, shunning all Dangers threatening its Destruction; to pourvey for the Support and Convenience of it; to satisfy those natural Appetites, which importunately crave Relief, and without intolerable Pain cannot be denied it; to repel or decline whatever is very grievous and offensive to Nature; the Self-love that urgeth us to do these things, is no more to be blamed than it can be shunned.

Reason farther alloweth such a Self-love, which moveth us to the pursuance of

*Τὸν μὲν ἀγαθὸν δὲ φιλαυτοῦ ἀναι· ὃ αὐτὸς ἐννοεῖ· τὸ καλὰ ποιεῖσθαι, ὃ τὸς ἄλλους ἀφελαι· ὃ μὲν ἀγαθὸν ἐστίν, βλάψη δὲ ἑαυτὸν· ὃ τὸς ἄλλους, παύσει τοὺς πάντας ἐν πᾶσι.* Arist. Eth. 9. 8.

any thing apparently good, pleasant, or useful to us, the which doth not contain in it any essential Turpitude or Iniquity; doth not obstruct the attainment of some true or greater Good; doth not produce some over-balancing Mischief; doth not infer harm to the World, or wrong to other Men.

*Πᾶς δὲ νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ βέλτιον ἑαυτοῦ, ὃ ἡ πρῶτης περὶ ἀρετῆς ἐστὶν.* Arist. Eth. 9. 8.

Reason dictateth and prescribeth to us, that we should have a sober Regard to our true Good and Welfare; to our best Interest, and solid Content; to that, which (all things being rightly stated, considered and computed) will in the final event prove most beneficial, and satisfactory to us: A Self-love working in prosecution of such things, common Sense cannot but allow and approve.

*Quia tutela certissima ex proximo est, sibi quisque commissus est. Sen. Ep. 121.*

God himself hath to these suggestions of Nature and dictates of Reason, adjoined his own Suffrage, having in various ways declared it to be his Will and Pleasure, that we should tender our real and final Good. He, as the Author of Nature, and Fountain of Reason, may be supposed to ordain that, unto which Nature doth so potently incline, and which Reason so clearly prescribeth. He plainly hath to every Man committed himself in charge, so as to preserve his Being from Ruin, and to enjoy it with Comfort. He by making so rich a Provision for the Sustainance of our Lives, and Satisfaction of our Appetites, by framing our Bodies to relish Delight, and suiting so many Accommodations in wondrous Correspondence



respondence to our Senses, hath sufficiently intimated it to be his Pleasure, that we should in reasonable Measure seek them and enjoy them; otherwise his Care would have been vain, and his Work useless; yea, he might seem to have laid an ill Design to tempt and ensnare us; he certainly had no such Intent, but as he made us our of Goodness, as he made us capable of tasting Comfort, as he hath furnished us with Means of attaining it; so he meaneth that we should partake thereof.

He also expressly hath commanded us to love all Men, not excluding our selves from the Number; to love our Neighbour, and therefore our selves; who of all are nearest to our selves; who occur as the first Objects of Humanity and Charity; whose Needs we most sensibly feel; whose Good is in it self no less considerable, than the single Good of any other Person; who must first look to our own Good, before we can be capable to love others, or do any good to our Neighbour.

He therefore hath made the Love of our selves to be the Rule and Standard, the Pattern, the Argument of our Love to others; imposing on us those great Commands of *loving our neighbours as our selves, and doing as we would be done unto*; which imply not only a Necessity, but an Obligation of loving our selves.

He doth enforce Obedience to all his Commands, by promising Rewards, yielding immense Profit and transcendent Pleasure to us; and by threatening Punishments grievous to our Sense; which Proceeding is grounded upon a Supposition that we do and ought greatly to love our selves, or to regard our own Interest and Pleasure.

He doth recommend Wisdom or Vertue to us, as most agreeable to Self-love; most eligible, because it yieldeth great Benefit to our selves; because (as the *Wise-man* saith) *he that getteth it, doth love his own soul; he that keepeth it shall find good.* Prov. 11. 8. 16. 11. 17.

*Aristotle* saith of a vertuous Man, that he is the greatest self-lover; *Δόξας δ' αὖν ἑβίης. 9. 8; ὁ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν μᾶλλον φιλαυτοῦς ἀνθρώπος, ὅς ἐαυτοῦ τὰ καλὰ καὶ τὰ μέγιστα ἀγαπᾷ, καὶ χαίρει ταῖς ἀγαθὰς καὶ κρείττοσι.*

He dissuadeth from Vice, as therefore detestable, because the embracing it doth imply Hatred of our selves, bringing Mischief and Damage to us; because (as the *Wise-man* doth express it) *he that sinneth wrongeth his own soul; he that despiseth instruction, despiseth his own soul; he that committeth injury, hateth his own soul.* Prov. 8. 36. 15. 36. 29. 24.

He commendeth his Laws to our observance, by declaring them in their design and tendency chiefly to regard our Good and Advantage; made apt to preserve the Safety and Quiet, to promote the Wealth and Prosperity of our Lives; to bring Ease and Comfort to our Minds, Grace and Ornament to our Names, Salvation and Happiness to our Souls. Deut. 10. 12. Mic. 6. 8. Neh. 9. 13. Prov. 3. 3. 4. 3c.

In fine, God chargeth and encourageth us to affect and pursue the highest Goods whereof we are capable; most ample Riches, most sublime Honours, most sweet Pleasures, most complete Felicity; He (saith St. Paul) *will render to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life*; to seek such Things is the highest Instance, is the surest Argument of Self-love that can be; he therefore, who obligeth, who encourageth us thereto, doth plainly shew his Approbation of a Self-love. Rom. 2. 7.

So it appeareth, that all Self-love is not culpable, but that some kind thereof is very commendable; how then shall we distinguish; how shall we sever (to use Jer. 15. 19; the Prophet's Language) *the precious from the vile*?

To this we may answer in general, that all Love of our selves, which is unreasonably grounded, or which is excessive in its Degrees and Limits; or which venteth it self in wrong instances; or which driveth our Mind, Will, and Affections toward bad Objects; or which produceth Effects noxious to our selves or others; is culpable. If we esteem our selves for things not true, or really for things indifferent or mean, for things no-wise excellent or valuable; if we affect our selves beyond compass, so as to postpone the Love of God, or exclude the Love of our Neighbour; if out of regard to our selves we do things base, or mischievous; if thence we dote upon vain Profits, embrace foul Pleasures, incur sinful Guilt, expose our selves to grievous Danger, Trouble, Remorse and Punishment; if thereby we are engaged to forsake our true Interest, and forfeit our final Happiness; then assuredly it is a foolish and vicious Self-love; it is indeed not a proper, but



but a false and equivocal Love, usurping that goodly Name; it is a real Hatred, or Enmity disguised under the Semblance of Friendship; it more properly may be called Cruelty, Treachery, Flattery, Mockery, Delusion, and Abuse of our selves.

But for a more distinct and clear Resolution of the Case, we may do well to consider the proper Acts of Love, which do constitute it, or inseparably do adhere thereto; such as these, a good Esteem of the Person, which is the Object of our Love; an earnest Good-will toward him, or desire of his Good; a complaisance in Good, and dissatisfaction in Evil arriving to him; a readiness to yield, or procure Good to him; a desire of Union and Enjoyment, that is, of intimate Conversation and Entercourse with him, a deference of regard to him, a compliance with his Desires, and care to please him. Now if these Acts toward our selves are in their Kind, in their Grounds, in their Measures conformable to Reason, Piety, and Justice, then is our Self-love innocent or worthy; if they are not so, it is criminal and vicious.

If we do rightly esteem our selves (both absolutely and in comparison to others; if we desire to our selves what is fit and just; if we are pleased with true Goods, and displeased at real Evils incident to us; if we do in lawful ways endeavour to procure things truly convenient, and beneficial to us; if we maintain a faithful and chearful Correspondence with our selves; if we have a sober Regard to our selves agreeable to our Nature and State; if we comply with the Dictates of our Reason, and satisfy our Desires conforming thereto; then do we love our selves innocently, then are we true Friends to our selves.

But if we over-value our selves, if we do wish to our selves things incommodious or hurtful, if we are delighted or dissatisfied in false Shows of Good or Evil befalling us; if we strive to acquire for our selves things bad or mischievous; if our Conversation with our selves is naughty or vain; if we make indecent Applications to our selves; if we stoop to our fond Humours, or soothe our unreasonable Desires; then is our Self-love spurious; then are we indeed Enemies to our selves.

Farther, toward an exact discussion and trial of this Case, we should do well, divesting our selves of Selfishness, to consider our selves, as other Persons, or abstractedly as mere Objects of those Acts which Love doth imply; for what Rectitude, or what Obliquity there would be in them in regard to any Object, the same would be in reference to our selves. For instance,

If we should value any Person justly according to his real Worth, allowing a just Rate to his Vertue, to his Parts, to his Endowments, to his Advantages of Nature or Fortune; not ascribing to him things which belong not to him, nor over-prizing those he hath, nor preferring him in any respect before those which are his Superiours or Equals therein; we shall herein do wisely and justly; but if (having our Judgment any-wise perverted) we do admire a Person beyond his Worth, and advance him above his Rank; if we overlook his apparent Defects and Blemishes, or take them for Excellencies, and yield them Applause; What is this but Folly and Dotage, tempered with Iniquity? And if it be such in regard to another, it is no less such in respect to our selves.

If to any Person we should wish things suitable, commodious, and advantageous, by obtaining which, he, without any wrong or prejudice to others, might be considerably benefitted, we shall herein act humanly, and like good Friends; but if we desire things to him, which do not become or besit him; which will do him mischief, or which he cannot have without injury and damage to others, are we not herein notoriously unkind or unjust? The Case is the same transferred to our selves.

If we should observe any Man by Occurrences happening to him well improved in his Condition, thriving in an honest Way, prosperous in good Undertakings, growing in worthy Accomplishments of Soul, to find Satisfaction therein would be greatly laudable; and so it would be to condole, if we should see any Man to fall into any grievous Disaster or Calamity; but should we behold a Man (although in false Appearance bettered, yet really) prejudiced and endamaged (as when one is enriched by cozenage or rapine, is advanced by flattery or sycophantry, is famed for base or vain Exploits, is immersed into Care and Trouble, is exposed to Danger and Temptation, is fallen into the Enchantments of Pleasure) are we not, if we take Pleasure therein, very silly, or very cruel? And if we should observe good Physick administred to a sick Neighbour, or that he is engaged in painful Exercise for his Health, should it not be absurd for us to be sorry thereat?

For



for the same Reasons we are blameable, if we do rejoyce when that we prosper in bad Courses, or enjoy sinful Pleasures, or fall into dangerous Temptations; if we distaste the wholesome Physick of Adversity dispensed by Providence, or dislike the needful Exercises of Duty by God prescribed to us.

If we do yield our Advice and Aid to our Neighbour, in furtherance of any Design, which is honest and beneficial to him, we then unquestionably do well; but if we do abet or encourage him in unjust or mischievous Enterprizes; if we render our selves Panders to his unlawful Desires, Factors for his unjust Profits, Complices of his wicked Practices, Advocates of his Sins, is this true Love, is this faithful Friendship? No surely; nor is it such toward our selves, when we employ our Faculties in contrivance or atchievement of any unlawful Designs, however satisfactory to our Desires.

If we should indifferently (without regard to the Laws of Piety, Justice, Humanity, or Decency) espouse the Interests of any Person, so that for the promoting his Designs, advancing his Profit, gratifying his Humour or Pleasure, we should violate the Commands of God, we should neglect the Publick Good, we should work Injury or Mischief to our Neighbour, would this Dealing be allowable? Neither would it be so, if for our own Sake, in regard to our private Interest we should thus behave our selves.

2. If we do affect to hold free, sincere, chearful, kind Conversation with any Person for mutual Instruction and Comfort, this is sociable and friendly; but if we maintain frothy, foul, malicious, any-wise pestilent Discourse, apt to corrupt, or to annoy him, this is loathsome; and so it is, if we keep such intercourse with our selves, harbouring vain, impure, unjust, uncharitable Thoughts in our Minds.

If we should defer Regard to any Man, answerable to his Worth, we should thereby practise according to the good Rules of Humanity; but should we so affect or fancy any Man that we should care for no Man else, should pay no due Respect, or perform any Office of Kindness otherwise; should take no Man's Word, or mind any Man's Opinion beside, nor care to converse with any other; would this be Love? Would it not be ridiculous Fondness? It is no less, if in regard to our selves, we are so morose, surly, or neglectful.

If we should comply with any Man's reasonable Desire, this were fair and courteous; if we should confide in the probable Assistance of any Person, this were modest Prudence; but if we should entirely conform our Practice to the Will or Humour of another, against the Dictates of our own Reason, and to the Harm of our selves or others; would this be Love, would it not rather be vile and pitiful Slavery? If we should without any ground, yea against plain Reason rely upon the Help or Direction of another, would this be Love, would it not rather be wild Presumption? The same therefore it must be in us, if we in like manner are devoted to our own Will, or confident in our own Ability.

If we should commend any Man for good Qualities or good Deeds, this is honest; if we should encourage him in good Undertakings, this is charitable; but to applaud his Defects, to bolster him in ill Practice, this is Flattery and Treachery; and in so doing towards others, we are not Friends to our selves, but Traitors and Parasites.

By such Reflexions and Comparisons we may, I think, competently understand the Nature of that Bastard-self-love, which is so vicious in it self, and productive of so many Vices: But more fully to display, and withal to dissuade us from this Vice, I shall particularly insist upon the common Sorts thereof, shewing the peculiar Unreasonableness of each, and the Mischiefs consequent from it: They are indeed usually combined and complicated in Practice; and have much Affinity both in their Nature and Fruit; but I shall as well as I can abstract them one from the other, and so treat on them distinctly; they are these, *Self-conceit, Self-confidence, Self-complacence, Self-will, Self-interest*. These I shall handle in the following Discourses.



# SERMON XXIX.

## Of SELF-CONCEIT.

2 TIM. III. 2.

*For Men shall be lovers of themselves, &c.*

**T**HE first and most radical kind of vicious Self-Love is *Self-conceitedness*; that which St. Paul calleth *to overween, or to think highly of ones self beyond what he ought to think.* This doth consist in several Acts or Instances.

Sometimes we in our Imagination assume to our selves Perfections not belonging to us in Kind or in Degree; we take our selves to be other Men than we are; to be wise, to be good, to be happy when we are not so, at least to be far wiser, better and happier than we are. The Pleasure naturally springing from a good Opinion of our selves doth often so blind our Eyes, and pervert our Judgment that we see in tis what is not there, or see it magnified or transformed into another Shape than its own; any Appearance doth suffice to produce such Mistakes, and having once entertained them, we are unwilling to depose them; we cannot endure by severe Reflexion on our selves to correct such pleasant Errors; hence commonly we presume our selves to be very considerable, very excellent, very extraordinary Persons, when in truth we are very mean and worthless; so did St. Paul suppose when he said, *If a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself*; such was the Case of that Church in the *Apocalypse*; *Thou sayest I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable*; they were like Men in a Dream, or in a Frenzy, who take themselves for great and wealthy Persons, when indeed they are in a sorry and beggarly Condition; into the like extravagancies of Mistake we are all likely to fall, if we do not very carefully and impartially examine and study our selves.

Again, sometimes we make vain Judgments upon the Things we do possess, prizing them much beyond their true Worth and Merit; consequently overvaluing our selves for them; the most trivial and pitiful Things (things which in themselves have no worth, but are meer Tools, and commonly serve bad Purposes; Things which do not render our Souls any-wise better, which do not breed any real Content, which do not conduce to our Welfare and Happiness) we value at a monstrous rate, as if they were the most excellent and admirable Things in the World: Have we Wit? How witless are we in prizing it, or our selves for it; although we employ it to no good End, not serving God, not benefiting Men, not furthering our own Good, or any-wise bettering our Condition with it; although we no otherwise use it, than vainly to please our selves or others, that is, to act the Part of Fools or Buffoons. Have we Learning or Knowledge? Then are we rare Persons; not considering that many a bad, many a wretched Person hath had much more than we, who hath used it to the abuse of others, to the torment of himself; that Hell may be full of learned Scribes, and subtle Disputers, of eloquent Orators and profound Philosophers; who when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish Heart was darkened, not considering also how very defective our Knowledge is, how mixt with Error and Darknes; how useles and vain, yea how pernicious it is, if not sanctified by God's Grace, and managed to his Service. Have we Riches? Then are we brave Men, as fine and glorious in our Conceit as in our outward Attire; although the veriest Fools, the basest and most miserable

Rom. 1. 21.  
*Ardus res hac  
est, opibus  
non tradere  
mores.*  
Mat. 11. 6.



able of Men, that go on the Ground, do exceed us therein ; although (as *Aristotle* saith) *Most either not use it, or abuse it.* Although our Wealth affordeth us no real Benefit or Comfort, but exposeth us to numberless Snares, Temptations, and Mischiefs ; although it hath no Stability, but easily may be taken from us. Have we Reputation ? How doth that make us highly to repute our selves in a slavish Imitation of others ? Yet nothing is less substantial, nothing is less felt, nothing is so easily lost, nothing is more brittle and slippery than it ; a Bubble is not sooner broken, or a Wave sunk, than is the Opinion of Men altered concerning us. Have we Power ? What doth more raise our Minds ? Yet what is that commonly but a dangerous Instrument of Mischief to others, and of Ruin to our selves ; at least an Engagement to Care and Trouble ? What but that did render *Caligula*, *Nero*, and *Domitian* so hurtful to others, so unhappy to themselves ? What but that hath filled the World with Disasters, and turned all History into Tragedy ? Have we prosperous Success in our Affairs ? Then we boast and triumph in our Hearts ; not remembring what the *Wise-man* saith, *The prosperity of Fools* Prov. 1. 32. *destroyeth them* ; and that Experience sheweth, Prosperity doth either usually find or make us Fools ; that the wisest Men (as *Solomon*) the best Men (as *Hezekiah*) have been befooled by it : Thus are we apt to over-value our Things, and our selves for them.

Τὸν πολλὸν οἱ μὲν ἐχρῶνται τὸ πλεονεξία, οἱ δὲ ἀποχρῶνται δι' ἀσυντίαν. *Arist. apud Plut. in Pelop.*

*Rarus enim ferme sensus communis in illa, Fortuna*

Juv. Sat. 8.  
2 Chron. 32. 25.

There is no way indeed, wherein we do not thus impose upon our selves, either assuming false, or misrating true Advantages ; the general ill Consequences of which Misdemeanor are, that our Minds are stult with Dreams and phantastick Imaginations, instead of wise and sober Thoughts ; that we misbehave our selves toward our selves, treating our selves like other Men than we are, with unseemly Regard ; that we expect other Men should have like Opinions, and yield answerable Deferences to us ; and are, if we find it otherwise, grievously offended ; that we are apt to despise or disregard others, demeaning our selves insolently and fastuously toward them : that we are apt to seek and undertake Things, which we cannot attain or achieve ; that we neglect the Succours needful to help, or comfort us, and the like ; which will appear more plainly, by considering the several Objects or Matters, in which Self-conceit is exercised : They are especially Three ; *Intellectual Endowments ; moral Qualities ; Advantages of Body, Fortune and outward State.*

I. We are apt to conceit highly of our selves, upon presumption of our *intellectual Endowments* or Capacities, whether *natural* (as *Wit, Fancy, Memory, Judgment,*) or *acquired* (as *Learning, Skill, Experience*) especially of that which is call'd *Wisdom*, which in a manner comprehendeth the rest, and manageth them ; whereby we rightly discern what is true, and what is fit to be done in any Case proposed : This we are prone in great Measure to arrogate, and much to pride our selves therein : The World is full as it can hold of *Wise-men*, or of those who take themselves to be such ; not only absolutely, but comparatively, in Derogation and Preference to all others : May it not be said to us, as *Job* did to his Friends, *No doubt but ye are the People, and Wisdom shall die with you ?* Do we not fancy our selves incomparably wise, so that all our Imaginations are deep and subtile, all our Resolutions sound and safe, all our Opinions irrefragably certain ; all our Sayings like so many Oracles, or indubitable Maxims ? Do we not expect that every Man's Judgment should stoop to ours ? Do we not wonder that any Man should presume to dissent from us ? Must any Man's Voice be heard, when we speak ? Do we not suppose that our Authority doth add huge weight to our Words, that 'tis unquestionably true because we say it ; that it is Presumption, 'tis Temerity, 'tis Rudeness hardly pardonable to contest our Dictates ? This is a common Practice, and that which is often prohibited and blamed in Scripture ; *Be not wise in thine own Eyes*, saith the *Wise-man* ; And, *Be not wise in your own Conceits*, saith the *Apostle* : And, *I say, through the Grace given unto me, to every Man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every Man the measure of Faith.*

1 Cor. 3. 18.  
Μαγεὶς ἑμὲ-  
δω, ἵνα ἡμῶν  
ταὶ σοφίαι.  
Vid. Chrys. in  
Phil. Or. 7.

Job 12. 2.

Οἱ πλείους  
ταὶ τοῖς  
συναισθηταῖς.

Prov. 3. 7.  
Rom. 12. 16.  
12. 3.

The great Reasonableness of which Precepts will appear, by considering both the Absurdity and the Inconveniences of the Practice which they forbid.



If we do reflect either upon the common Nature of Men, or upon our own Constitution, we cannot but find our Conceits of our Wisdom very absurd: For how can we take our selves for wise, if we observe the great Blindness of our Mind, and Feebleness of human Reason, by many palpable Arguments discovering it self? If we mark how painful the Search, and how difficult the Comprehension is of any Truth; how hardly the most sagacious can descry any thing, how easily the most judicious mistake; how the most learned everlastingly dispute, and the wisest irreconcilably clash about Matters seeming most familiar and facile; how often the most wary and steady do shift their Opinions; how the wiser a Man is, and the more Experience he gaineth, the less confident he is

*Quamcunque partem rerum humanarum divinarumque comprehenderit, ingenti copia quaerendarum ac discendarum fatigaberis. Sen. Ep. 88.*

in his own Judgment, and the more sensible he groweth of his Weakness; how dim the Sight is of the most perspicacious, and how shallow the Conceptions of the most profound; how narrow is the *Horizon* of our Knowledge, and how im-

mensely the Region of our Ignorance is distended; how imperfectly and uncertainly we know those few Things, to which our Knowledge reacheth; how answerably to such Experience we are told in *sacred Writ*, that *Every Man is brutish in his Knowledge*; that *the Lord knoweth the Thoughts of Man, that they are Vanity*; that *Vain Man would be wise, though he be born like an Asses Colt* (that is, he is naturally wild and stupid) that *Wisdom is hid from the Eyes of all Men, and is not found in the Land of the Living*; that *The Thoughts of mortal Men are miserable, and our Devices uncertain*; if we, I say, do consider such Things, how can we but find it strange, that any Man should admire his own Wisdom, seeing that he thereby doth exempt himself from the common Adjunct of his Nature, and forgetteth himself to be a Man.

Jer. 10. 14.  
Psal. 94. 11.  
1 Cor. 3. 20.  
Job 11. 12.  
Job 28. 21, 22.  
Sap. 9. 14.

If also a Man particularly reflecteth on himself, the same Practice must needs appear very foolish; for that every Man thence may discover in himself peculiar Impediments of Wisdom; every Man in his Complexion and in his Condition, may find things apt to pervert his Judgment, and obstruct his Acquisition of true Knowledge: Is his Temper Sanguine? Thence becometh he quick, rash, credulous, confident, and peremptory, slippery and fickle: Is it Phlegmatick? Thence is he slow and heavy, diffident, pertinacious, and stiff in his Conceits: His Mind is either soft and limber, so as easily to receive the Impressions of Falshood speciously represented; or hard and tough, so that he cannot readily admit Instruction in Truth, or Correction of Error. His Wealth distracteth, or his Poverty disturbeth his Thoughts; Prosperity swelleth his Mind up into vain Presumptions and Satisfaction; or Adversity sinketh it down into unreasonable Despondencies and Dislikes of things: Plenty breedeth Sloth, Want createth Trouble, indisposing him to think well; Ease doth rust his Parts, and Business weareth them out; Inclination, Interest, Company, Prejudice do forcibly sway his Apprehensions; so that no Man can get himself into, or keep himself steady in a perfect Balance, requisite for exact Judgment of things; no Man therefore can obtain a degree of Wisdom, whereof he may with any reason be conceited; the wisest Men surely upon such Experience have been little satisfied with their share; Surely (saith one)

Prov. 3. 2.  
Psal. 73. 22.

*I am more brutish than any man, and I have not the understanding of a man: and, So foolish (said another) was I, and ignorant, I was as a beast before thee: This Conceitedness therefore is very absurd, and an Argument of notable Ignorance and Folly; neither is there perhaps any more plain Instance or Demonstration of general Folly reigning among Men, than this, that commonly we are so blind and stupid as not to discern and resent our own Folly; If any man (saith St. Paul) thinketh that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth not any thing yet as he ought to know: that is, If any Man conceiteth himself to be considerably wise or intelligent, 'tis a plain Sign, that he is very ignorant, and understandeth little to any Purpose.*

1 Cor. 8. 2.

So it is if we consider our selves singly; and it is more so, in comparison to others; for what Ground can a Man have of arrogating to himself a peculiarity of Wisdom or Judgment? To deem himself extraordinary in that, to which there are no other than ordinary Means of arriving? To fancy himself wiser than any other, when as (secluding accidental Differences, that cannot be accounted for) all Men have the same Parts and Faculties of Soul, the same Means and Opportunities of Improvement; the same right and liberty of judging about things. Did

Zech. 12. 1.

not he, who *formeth the spirit of man within him*, put into every Man that heavenly Mark,



Mark, whereby we discern and judge of things? Is not every Man concerned in that saying of *Elihu*; *there is a spirit in men, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding*? Do not the Fountains of Knowledge (natural Delight, divine Revelation, human Instruction, continual Experience) stand open to all; and are no less common to Men, than is the Air they breathe, and the Sun, which equally shineth on them all? Is God, the Donor of Wisdom, partial in the distribution of it; doth not that Overture reach indifferently to all, *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, — and it shall be given him.* Ex Begrois. LXX. Job 32. 8. Jam. 1. 5. May not others be as Inquisitive, as Industrious, as Sincere as we in the search of Truth, why not then as Successful in finding it? Is there any private Chink, through which Light shineth only upon us, or Truth may be espied? Is there any cunning by-path, in which we alone, with more expedition and security than others, in the common Roads, can travel on toward Knowledge? What Patents have we to shew for Monopoly of Reason? What Right have we to engross any Knowledge? Who hath granted us a Privilege of sure Judgment, or an exemption from Error? How can we in trial of Things claim more than a single Vote? Or, Why should our word have more weight than any other? May not any Man, with as much reason, prefer his Judgment before ours, as we before his; and if we blame him for it, do we not thereby condemn our selves for doing the like? If we do know but the same Things, or frame the same Judgments with others, how can we be conceited of that which is promiscuous; if we pretend to abstruse Notions, or hold forth Paradoxes, how can that be ground of Boasting, seeing the Cause standeth contested by Authority, no less than our own, and that it is vain to triumph over the Opinions of others before we have conquered them? Why in such Cases is it not reasonable to presume that among the many Dissenters from us, there are some who have as much Sense as we, and who have weighed the Matter with no less Care, no less Indifferency? In fine, may not any Man with good Cause, propound to us that expostulation in *Job*? *Hast thou heard the secret of God, and dost thou restrain Wisdom to thyself? what knowest thou that we know not? what understandest thou which is not in us?* Job 15. 8.

Such Conceitedness therefore is very absurd; and it is no less hurtful, for many great Inconveniencies, many sad Mischiefs spring from it, such as gave the Prophet cause to denounce, *Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own conceit*: It hath many ways bad influence on our Souls, and on our Lives; it is often our Case, which was the Case of *Babylon*, when the Prophet said of it, *Thy Wisdom and thy Knowledge hath perverted thee; for thou hast said in thy heart, I am, and none else beside me.* Isa. 47. 10.

It is a great Bar to the getting Wisdom, to the receiving Instruction and right Information about things; for he that taketh himself to be abundantly Knowing, or incomparably Wise, will not care to learn, will scorn to be taught; he thence becometh more incapable of Wisdom than a meer Idiot; so did *Solomon* observe, *Seest thou, said he, a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a Fool than of him*; of a Fool that is sensible of his own Ignorance, there may be hope, that he may by Instruction become Wise; but he that taketh himself to want no Instruction, or to be above Learning, is in a desperate Condition. Hac est hominis vera sapientia imperfectum esse se nosse. Hier. contra. Pelag. 1. 5. Puto multos potuisse ad sapientiam pervenire, nisi putassent se pervenisse. Sen. de tranq. an. 1.

It rendreth Men in doubtful or difficult Cases, unwilling to seek, and unapt to take Advice; he will not care for, or admit any Counsellor but himself; hence he undertaketh and easily is deceived, and incurreth disappointment, damage, disasters in his Affairs. As it is most incident to weak, inconsiderate, lazy Persons, who have not a Capacity, will not yield attention, or take pains to get right Notions of Things, so it doth smother all Industry, Consideration, and Circumspection; for such Persons think they need no labour in searching Truth, no care in weighing Arguments, no diligence in observing Things; they can easily, at first sight, descry all, and penetrate to the bottom of Things; they have at easie rates the Pleasure of fancying themselves wise; why should they spend farther Pains to dispossess themselves of that Pleasure, or to introduce another less Satisfactory? Thus is the *sluggard* (as *Solomon* saith) *wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason.* Prov. 26. 16.

It rendreth us very rash and precipitant in judging; for the first shews of Things, or the most slender Arguments, which offer themselves, being magnified, and



and aggravated from Opinion concerning our selves, do sway our Judgment, and draw forth a sudden Resolution from us; it must, we presently suppose, be very reasonable, because it seemeth reasonable to us.

Hence also we persist, obstinate and incorrigible in Error; for what Reason can be efficacious to reclaim him, whose Opinion is the greater Reason? What Argument can be ponderous enough to outweigh his Authority? How can he (the Man of Wisdom, the perspicacious and profound Person) yield that he hath erred? How can he part with the Satisfaction of being always in the right, or endure the Affront of being any time baffled?

It rendreth Men peevish and morose, so as to bear on body that dissenteth from them, nor to like any thing which doth not hit their Fancy; to cross their Opinion and Humour, is to derogate from their Wisdom; and being in their Apprehension so injured, they find Cause to be angry.

It rendreth them insolent and imperious in Conversation, so as to dictate, and impose their Conceits upon others. He that is conceited of his own Wisdom, will imagine, that upon that Advantage he hath a Right to prescribe, others an Obligation to submit; *eo ipso* he becometh a common Master and Judge; and they are culpable, who will not yield him a credulous Ear, who will not stand to his Decision.

Hence also do Men become so carping and censorious; for if any Man's Words do not jump with their Notions, if any Man's Actions be not conformable to their Rules, they straightway rise up to condemn them of Folly, of Faultiness.

Yea, hence Men become intolerably Pragmatical; for they conceit themselves better to know another's Concernment than he himself doth, and so will intrude his Advice, will be angry if his Advice be not followed.

To such Inconveniencies and Iniquities this ill-disposition exposeth us, and to many others; for it is indeed that in effect, which the Holy-Scripture representeth as the Source of all impious and wicked Courses; to which Men betray themselves, while taking themselves to be wise, they do stiffly adhere to their own Imaginations and Devices, although contrary to the Prescriptions of divine Wisdom, to the Dictates of common Reason, to the Admonitions of sober and good

Men: *We will* (say they in the Prophet) *walk after own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart; and, I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious People: Which walketh in a way that is not good, after their own Thoughts.*  
 Jer. 13. 10.  
 6. 19.  
 Isa. 65. 2. 53.  
 6.  
 Deut. 28. 18. And, *If he blesteth himself, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart: and, So I gave them unto their hearts lusts, and they walked in their own Counsels:* These are descriptions of bad Men, implying Self-conceit to be the Root of their Impiety.  
 Psal. 81. 12.  
 Prov. 1. 30.  
 31.  
 Isa. 66. 4.

2. Again, we are apt to conceit highly and vainly of our moral Qualities and Performances; taking our selves for Persons rarely good, perfect and blameless; apprehending no defects in our Souls, or miscarriages in our Lives, although indeed we are as full of blemishes, we are as guilty of Faults as others; *There is* (saith the Wise-man) *a Generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness;* to this Generation we belong if we admire our Vertues, if we justify our Lives, if (as it is said of the Pharisee) *we trust in our selves, that we are righteous.*  
 Prov. 30. 12.  
 Luke 18. 9.  
 16. 15. 10. 29.

This Practice doth include great Folly, and it produceth great Mischiefs.

'Tis very foolish; and argueth the greatest Ignorance that can be; for such is the Imperfection, the Impotency, the Impurity of all Men, even of the wisest and best Men (discernible to them who search their Hearts, and try their Ways, strictly comparing them to the Rules of Duty, God's Laws, and the Dictates of Reason) that no Man can have Reason to be satisfied in himself, or in his Doings: Every Man looking into himself, shall find his Mind so pestered with vain and filthy Thoughts; his Will so perverse, so froward, so weak, so unsteady; his Desires so fond and unwarrantable; his Passions so disorderly and ungovernable; his Affections so misplaced, or at least so cold, and dull in regard to their right Objects; his Resolutions toward Good so weak and slack; his Intentions so corrupt, or mix'd with oblique Regards; he that observeth his Actions, shall in the best of them (as to the Principles whence they rise, as to the Ends they drive at, as to the Manner of their Performance) find so many great defaultances, that he will see Cause rather to abhor than admire himself.

Who,



Who, let me ask, doth love God with all his Soul, so as to place in him his total Content and Delight; so as to do all things out of Love to him, with a Regard to his Honour and Service? So as to be willing and glad to part with all things for his Sake? Who hath that constant and lively Sense of God's Benefits and Mercies that he should have? Who hath a perfect Resignation of Will to his Pleasure, so as to be displeased with no Event dispensed by his Hand? Who hath such a Vigour of Faith and Confidence in him, as will support him in all Wants, in all Distresses, in all Temptations, so as never to be disquieted, or discouraged by them, so as to cast on God (as he is commanded) all the cares of his Soul, and burthens of his Life? Who constantly maintaineth a Fervour of Spirit, a Steadiness of Resolution, a clear and calm Frame of Soul, an abstractedness of Mind from worldly Desires and Delights? Who continually is fervent and undistracted in his Devotion? Who with an unwearied and incessant Diligence doth watch over his Thoughts? Who doth entirely command his Passions, and bridle his Appetites? Who doth exactly govern his Tongue? Who is perpetually circumspect over his Actions? Who loveth his Neighbour as himself, seeking his good, and delighting therein as in his own; being sorry for his Adversities, as if they had befallen himself? Who feeleth that contrition of Spirit, that Shame, that Remorse for his Sins, or that detestation of them, which they deserve? Who is duly sensible of his own unworthiness? Very few of us surely, if we examine our Consciences, can answer, that we are they who perform these Duties; and if not, where is any Ground of Self-Conceit? How much cause rather is there of dejection, of displeasure, of despising and detesting our selves?

There have indeed been Sects of Men (such as the Novatians, and the Pelagians) who have pretended to Perfection and Purity; but these Men one would think did never read the Scripture, did never consult Experience, did never reflect on their Minds; did never compare their Practice with their Duty; had no Conscience at all, of a very blind and stupid one. Who can say, I have made my Heart clean, I am pure from my sin? Was a Question of Solomon, to which he thought no Man could answer affirmatively of himself: If I justify myself, my own Mouth shall condemn me; if I say I am perfect, it shall prove me perverse; was the Asseveration of that Person, whose Vertue had undergone the severest Trials; In many things we offend all; was the Confession of an Apostle in the Name of the wisest and best Men.

Such Men indeed (in contemplation of themselves, and of their doings) have ever been ready to think meanly of themselves, to acknowledge and bewail their unworthiness, to disclaim all Confidence in themselves, to avow their Hope wholly to be reposed in the Grace and Mercy of God; (in his Grace for Ability to perform somewhat of their Duty, in his Mercy for Pardon of their Offences;) to confess themselves (with Jacob) Less than the least of God's mercies; with David, that they are Worms, and no Men; with Job, that they are vile, and unable to answer God, calling them to account, in one case of a thousand; that they abhor themselves, and repent in dust and ashes; that after they have done all, they are unprofitable Servants: And is he not very blind, who doth see in himself those Perfections, which the greatest Saints could not descry in themselves? Is he not infinitely vain, that fancies himself more worthy, than they did take themselves to be?

In fine, Every Man is in some kind and degree bad, sinful, vile; it is as natural for us to be so, as to be frail, to be sickly, to be mortal: There are some bad Dispositions common to all, and which no Man can put off without his Flesh; there are some, to which every Man (from his Temper, Inclination and Constitution of Body or Soul) is peculiarly subject; the which by no Care and Pain can be quite extirpated; but will afford, during Life, perpetual Matter of Conflict and Exercise to curb them; Conceit therefore of our Vertue is very foolish.

And it breedeth many great Mischiefs.

Hence doth spring a great Security, and Carelessness of correcting our Faults; for taking our selves to be well, we see not any need of Cure, thence seek none, nor admit any.

Yea, hence riseth a Contempt of any means conducive to our amendment, such as good Advice, and wholsom Reproof; to advise such an one is to accuse him wrongfully, to reprove him is to commit an Outrage upon his presumed Integrity of Vertue. Hence also proceedeth a neglect of imploring the Grace and Mercy of

Hier. in Lucif. cap. 6.

1. 1. 1. 1.

1. 1. 1. 1.

1. 1. 1. 1.

The Donatists

remissi-

rum sic datus,

quasi nullum

habebat ipsi

peccatum, &c.

Opt. lib. 2.

Prov. 20. 9.

Eccl. 7. 20.

Job 9. 20.

15. 15. 25. 4.

4. 18. 9. 2.

(Psal. 143. 2.)

Jam. 3. 2.

Job 40. 4.

42. 6. 9. 2.

Luke 17. 10.

Matt. 9. 12.

John 9. 41.



of God; for why should Persons of so great Strength crave Succour; how should they beg Pardon, who have so little Sense of Guilt? It is for a weak Person  
 Luke 18. 13. to cry, Lord help me; it is for a *Publican* to pray, *God be merciful unto me a Sinner.*

It breedeth Arrogance and Presumption even in Devotions, or Addresses to God, inducing such Persons in unseemly manner to justify themselves before God, to claim singular Interest in him, to mind him, and as it were to upbraid him with their worthy Deeds, to thank him for their imaginary Excellencies; like the conceited *Pharisee*; *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other Men, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers. I fast twice a Week, I give Tithes of all that I possess.* They cannot demean themselves toward God as miserable Sinners, who fancy themselves as admirable Worthies and Gallants in Vertue.

Also a natural result thereof is a haughty Contempt of others, venting it self in  
 Luke 18. 9. a supercilious and fastuous Demeanour: So it was in the *Pharisees*, who (saith St. Luke) *trusted in themselves, that they were righteous, and despised others.* Such Persons observing, or suspecting Defects and Misbehaviours in others, but discerning none in themselves, do in their Opinion advance themselves above their Brethren, and accordingly are prone to behave themselves toward them: Such Men as they are, the especially good Men, the Godly, the Saints, the Flower of Mankind, the Choice ones, the Darlings of God, the Favourites of Heaven; the special Objects of divine Love and Care: Others are impure and profane, reprobate and reprobate People, to whom God beareth no good-will or regard; hence proceedeth a contemptuous Disregard or Estrangedness toward other Men; like that of those *Separatists* in the *Prophet*, who notwithstanding they were a *People provoking God to anger continually to his Face*, were yet in Conceit of their own special Purity ready to say, *Stand by thy self, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou*: Whereas those who soberly reflecting on their Nature, their Hearts, their Ways, do frame a right Judgment of themselves, can hardly esteem any Man worse than themselves; they perceive themselves so frail, so defectuous, so culpable, as to find great reason for their Compliance with those *Apostolical Precepts*; *In lowliness of Mind, let each Man esteem others better than himself; In honour prefer one another.*

This likewise disposeth Men to expect more than ordinary regard from others; and they are much displeased, if they find it not in Degree answerable to their Conceit of themselves; taking them for silly, envious, or injurious Persons, who forbear to yield it: Such excellent Persons must in all Things be humoured, and cockered, otherwise you greatly wrong them.

Hence also such Men easily become discontented and impatient; for if they be crossed in any thing, if any Misfortune toucheth them, they take it very ill; supposing they deserve it not, but are worthy of better Usage and Fortune.

In fine, as this causeth a Man to behave himself untowardly in respect to all others (toward God, and toward his Neighbour) so thence he most unbecomingly carrieth himself toward himself, he is no faithful Friend, no good Companion to himself, but a fond *Mignon*, a vile Flatterer, or a profane Idolater of himself: For (like *Narcissus*) being transported with Conceit of his own incomparable Beauty or Excellency, he maketh love to, and courteth himself; finding Delight in such  
 Psal. 36. 2. Conceit, he by all means cherisheth it, glozing and flattering himself (as the *Psalm* hath it) *in his own Eyes*; representing his Qualities to his Imagination in false shapes, he devoutly adoreth those Idols of his Brain. Farther,

3. Self-conceit is also frequently grounded upon other inferior Advantages; upon gifts of Nature (as Strength, Activity, Beauty) upon gifts of Fortune (so called) as Birth, Wealth, Dignity, Power, Fame, Success; upon these Things Men ordinarily much value themselves, and are strangely puffed up with vain Opinion; taking themselves from them to be great and happy Persons; but seeing (as we touched before) these Things are in themselves little valuable (as serving no great Purpose, nor furthering our true Happiness) seeing they are not commendable (as not depending on our free Choice, but proceeding from Nature or Chance) seeing they are not durable or certain, but easily may be severed from us; the Vanity of Self-conceit founded on them is very notorious, and I shall not insist more to declare it; I shall only recommend the *Prophet's* Advice concerning such Things; *Let not the wise Man glory in his Wisdom; neither let the mighty Man glory*



glory in his Might; let not the rich Man glory in his Riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me; that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness in the Earth: That is, Nothing within us, or about us, should elevate our Minds, excepting the Assurance, that God doth govern the World, being ready to protect and succour us; to dispense Mercy and Justice to us; so that how weak and helpless soever in our selves, yet confiding in him, we shall never be overwhelmed by any Wrong or Misfortune.

So much concerning Self-Conceit, the other Parts of vitious Self-Love may be referred to another Occasion.

## SERMON XXX.

### Of Self-Confidence, Self-Complacence, Self-Will, and Self-Interest.

2 TIM. III. 2.

For Men shall be lovers of themselves, &c.

Of Self-Confidence:

II. **A**Nother like culpable kind of Self-Love, is that of *Self-Confidence*; when Men beyond Reason, and without regard unto God's Providence, do rely upon themselves, and their own Abilities, imagining that, without God's Direction and Help, by the Contrivances of their own Wit and Discretion, by the prevalency of their own Strength and Courage, by their industrious Care, Resolution and Activity they can compass any Design, they can attain any Good, they can arrive to the utmost of their Desires, and become sufficiently happy, not considering that on God (in whose hand our *Breath is, and whose are all our ways; in whose hand is the Soul of every living thing, and the Breath of all Mankind*) all our Being, and all our Ability do absolutely depend; that he manageth and turneth all Things, dispensing Success according to his Pleasure; that no good thing can be performed without the Supply and Succour of his Grace, nothing can be achieved without the Concurrency of his Providence; that, *The way of Man is not in himself, it is not in Man that walketh to direct his Steps; that, The Preparations of the Heart in Man, and the answer of the Tongue is from the Lord; that, although, A Man's Heart deviseth his way, yet the Lord directeth his Steps; that, No King is saved by the multitude of an Host, a mighty Man is not delivered by much strength, a Horse is a vain thing for safety; The Race is not to the swift, nor the Battle to the strong: That* (as St. Paul, one abundantly furnished with Abilities suiting his Designs as any Man can be, doth acknowledge) *we are not sufficient of our selves to think any thing, but our sufficiency is of God*: These Oracles of Truth, and even Dictates of Reason, no less than Principles of Religion they consider not, who confide in their own Abilities, with which Nature or Fortune do seem to have furnished them.

This is that instance of Self-Love, which the *Wise-man* biddeth us to beware of: *Trust* (saith he) *in the Lord with all thine Heart, and lean not to thine own Understanding; In all thy Ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy Paths.* This is that which he condemneth as foolish, and opposite to wise Proceeding; *He that trusteth in his own Heart, is a Fool; but who so walketh wisely, shall be delivered.*

Vol. III.

I i

This



—equum mi  
animum ipse  
parabo.

This is that which smothereth Devotion, and keepeth Men from having recourse to God; while they think it needless to ask for that which they have in their Power, or have Means of obtaining; this consequently depriveth them of Divine Aid, which is afforded only to those who seek it, and confide therein.

This often engageth Men to attempt Things rashly, and causeth them to come off unhappily; God interposing to cross them, with purpose to cure their Error, to confound their Presumption.

From hence, if God ever suffereth their Attempt to prosper, they sacrilegiously and profanely arrogate to themselves the Success, *sacrificing to their own Net*, and saying with him in the Prophet, *By the strength of my Hand have I done it, and by my Wisdom, for I am prudent.*

Isa. 10. 13.

This causeth most Men to fail of true Content here, and of Happiness finally; while taking them to be, where they are not, at home, within their own hand, or reach, they neglect to search after them Abroad, there where they only do lie, in the Hand and Disposal of God.

### Of Self-Complacence.

III. A like Act of blameable Self-Love, is *Self-Complacence*, that is, greatly delighting in ones self, or in the Goods which he fancieth himself to enjoy, or in the Works which he performeth: When Men in Contemplation of their Works and Achievements go strutting about, and saying with that vain Prince, *Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?* When reflecting on their Possessions they applaud and bless themselves, like the Rich Man in the Gospel, *Soul (saith he), looking upon his accumulated Store) thou hast much Goods laid up for many Years*: Such vain Soliloquies do Men ordinarily make: Thou hast (saith a Man to himself) rare Endowments of Soul; a wonderful Skill and Ability in this and that Matter; thou art Master of excellent Things; thou hast managed very important Business, hast accomplished hard Designs, hast achieved brave Feats, with great Dexterity and admirable Success, by thy Wit and Industry; thou hast framed and vented very curious Orations, very facetious Speeches, very nervous and pithy Discourses; thou hast put Obligations upon this Man, and that; thou hast got much Credit and Interest amongst Men; the World much looketh on thee, loveth and prizeth thee hugely, refoundeth with thy Fame and Praise; surely thy Worth is notable, thy Deserts are egregious; how happy art thou in being such a Person, in performing such Things, in enjoying such Advantages? Thus with a spurious and filthy Pleasure do Men reflect upon and revolve in their Minds the Goods they deem themselves to possess, and the favourable Occurrences that seem to befall them; being fond of their own Qualities and Deeds as of their Children, which, however they are in themselves, do always appear handsome and towardly unto them; any little thing is great and eminent, any ordinary thing is rare, any indifferent thing is excellent to them, because it is theirs; out of any thing, how dry and insipid soever it is in it self, they suck a vain and foolish Pleasure.

Dan. 4. 30.

Luke 12. 19.

Hence is that honest and pure Delight, which they should taste in Faith and Love toward God, in the Hope of future Celestial Things, in the Enjoyment of Spiritual Blessings, in the Conscience of virtuous Practice, quite choaked or greatly damped.

Hence also that hearty Contrition, and sober Sadness, which by Reflexion upon their great Defects, and frequent Miscarriages they should continually maintain in their Souls, is utterly stifled.

Hence also that charitable Complacency in the Welfare and Condolency with the Adversities of their Brethren is suppressed; Hence cannot they be satisfied with any thing done by others, they cannot apprehend the worthy Deserts, they cannot render due Commendation to the good Deeds of their Neighbour; for while Men are so pleased with their own imaginary Felicities, they cannot well discern, they will not be duly affected with the real Advantages, or Disasters of themselves, or of others.

### Of Self-Will.

IV. Another culpable kind of Self-Love, is *Self-Will*; (*αὐθάδεια*, pleasing ones self in his Choice, and proceeding without, or against Reason) when a Man unaccountably



accountably or unreasonably, with obstinate Resolution, pursueth any Course of-  
fensive to others, or prejudicial to himself, so that he will not  
hearken to any Advice, nor yield to any Consideration divert-  
ing him from his Purpose, but putteth off all, with a—*Stat*  
*pro ratione voluntas*: Say what you can, let what will come on  
it, I will do as I please, I will proceed in my own way; so I  
am resolved, so it shall be.

This is that generally which produceth in Men the wilful Commission of Sin;  
although apparently contrary to their own Interest and Welfare, depriving them  
of the best Goods, bringing on them most heavy Mischiefs; this causeth them  
irreclaimably to persist in Impenitence. Hence do they stop their Ears against  
wholesome Counsel, they harden their Hearts against most pathetical and softning  
Discourses, they *withdraw their Shoulder*, they *stiffen their Neck* against all sober Pre-  
cepts, Admonitions, and Reproofs; they defeat all Means and Methods of Cor-  
rection; they will not hear God Commanding, Entreating, Promising, Threat-  
ning, Encouraging, Chastising; they will not regard the Advices and Reprehen-  
sions of Friends; the most apparent Consequences of Damage, Disgrace, Pain,  
Perdition upon their ill Courses will not stir them; their Will is impregnable against  
the most powerful Attempts to win and better them: Let all the Wisdom in the  
World solicit them, with a *Turn at my Reproof*, it shall have Occasion to complain;  
*They would none of my Counsel, they despised all my Reproof.*

This is that also more particularly, which breedeth so much  
Mischief to the Publick, which pestereth and disturbeth pri-  
vate Conversation: This maketh Conversation harsh, and  
Friendship intolerable.

Hence are Men in their demeanour so peevish and froward, so perverse and  
cross-grain'd, so stiff and stubborn; with much inconvenience to others, and com-  
monly with more to themselves.

Hence will they not submit to the Commands of their Superiours; they will not  
comply with the Customs of their Country, they will not be complaisant in Con-  
versation; but every where raise factious Oppositions, kindle fierce Contentions,  
maintain disorderly Singularities: They care not how, for enjoying their Humour,  
they break the Peace of the World, they disturb the Order of Things, they create  
Tumults and Troubles in any Society; they bring Vexations and Mischiefs on  
others, on themselves. They do not consider, or value the great harm they  
bring upon the Publick, nor how much themselves do suffer by it; so they have  
their Will, what if the State be plunged into confusion and trouble; what if their  
Neighbours be sorely incommoded; what if themselves lose their Ease and  
Pleasure?

It must be just as they will have it; what if ten to one think otherwise; what  
if generally the wisest Men are agreed to the contrary, what if the most pressing  
necessity of Affairs do not admit it; what if publick Authority (those whom all  
Equity doth constitute Judges, and to whom God himself hath committed the  
arbitration thereof) do not allow it; yet so it must be, because they fancy it,  
otherwise they will not be quiet; so do they sacrifice the greatest Benefits of So-  
ciety (publick Order and Peace, mutual Love and Friendship, common Safety and  
Prosperity) to their private Will and Humour.

This is that, which St. Paul so often did forbid in Word; and discountenanced  
in Practice: For the Edification of others, to procure Advantage to his Endeavours,  
to shun Offence, to preserve Concord and Amity, he waved pleasing his  
own Desire and Fancy, he complied with the Conceits and Humours even of those  
who were most ignorant and weak in Judgment; he even subjected and enslaved  
himself to the Pleasure of others, directing us to do the like: *We then (saith he) that*  
*are strong, ought to bear the Infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves: Let*  
*every one of us please his Neighbour for his good to Edification: For even Christ pleased*  
*not himself* (he adjoineth the great Example of our Lord to enforce his own.)  
Again; *Give none Offence, saith he, Even as I please all Men in all things, not seeking*  
*mine own Profit, but the Profit of the many, that they may be saved: Be ye (herein)*  
*followers of me, as I am of Christ; and again, To the weak became I as weak, that I*  
*might gain the weak; I am made all things to all Men, that I might by all means, save*  
*some: Though I be free from all Men (that is, although I have no Superiour, that*

Παλ δὲ ἐν ἀπαρτί ἔγωγε, μηκέτι με  
αὐδίζω πύδην. Nero apud Dion. Cass.  
Οἱ ἀμαθείς ἐχθροὶ τῶν σοφῶν. Synes  
Calv.  
Vid. Sen. Ep. 23. de Ben. 438. Arr.  
2. 15.

Neh. 9. 28.  
Jer. 7. 26. 5. 3.  
Deut. 31. 27.  
Prov. 1. 25.

Prov. 1. 23.  
25. 29.

—τὸ αὐτὸ δ' ἀνδρὶ μὴτ' ἄλλω φησὶ,  
Μὴτε ἐυνέσω, ὅς τις αὐτάρκην φρονέῃ  
Πέποιθε, δάνας τὸς φίλους ἐνδύμην.  
Eurip.

Ἀνδρῶν ἐν  
ἐνὶ τῇ ἐνδο-  
κίᾳ. Plat. ad  
Dionem, Ep. 4.



can command me, or oblige me in these Matters) yet have I made my self Servant to all, that I might gain the more. What this excellent Person was in this Instance of managing Ecclesiastical Discipline, and promoting the Gospel, that both in the same Cases, and in the Prosecution of all other Designs, in all our Conversations and Practices should we likewise be.

We should in no Case indulge our own Humour or Fancy, but ever look to the Reason of the Thing, and act accordingly, whatever it requireth.

We should never act, without striving with competent Application of Mind to discern clearly some Reason why we act; and from observing the Dictates of that Reason no unaccountable Cause should pervert us; blind Will, head-strong Inclination, impetuous Passion should never guide, or draw, or drive us to any thing; for this is not to act like a Man, but as a Beast, or rather worse than a Beast; for Beasts operate by a blind Instinct indeed, but such as is planted in them by a superiour Wisdom, unerringly directing them to a pursuit of their true Good; but Man is left *in manu consilii sui*, is obliged (under fore Penalties) not to follow blind

Sap. 1. 12.

Deut. 30. 19.

1 Cor. 10. 24.

Inclinations or Instinct; but to act with serious Deliberation and Choice, to observe explicate Rules and Resolutions of Reason.

#### Of Self-Interest.

Vid. Chryf. in

1 Cor. 10. 25.

V. Another culpable sort of Self-Love is that of *Self-Interest*; when Men inordinately or immoderately do covet and strive to procure for themselves these worldly Goods, meerly because profitable or pleasant to themselves, not considering or regarding the good of others, according to the rules of Justice, of Humanity, of Christian Charity; when their Affections, their Cares, their Endeavours do mainly tend to the Advancement, Advantage or Delight of themselves; they little caring what cometh on it, who loseth, who suffereth thereby.

They look upon themselves as if they were all the World, and no Man beside concerned therein, or considerable to them; that the good State of Things is to be measured by their Condition; that all is well, if they do prosper and thrive; all is ill, if they are disappointed in their Desires and Projects.

The good of no Man, not of their Brethren, not of their Friends, not of their Country doth come with them under Consideration; what Scandals do arise, what Disorders are committed, what Mischiefs are caused they matter not, if they get somewhat thereby: What if the Church or State be reproached, what if the Neighbourhood be offended, or disturbed, what if the World cry out and complain, if they become richer by it, or have their Passion gratified, or find some Pleasure in it?

This is the chief Spring of Injustice: For from hence it is, that oftentimes Men regard not what Courses they take, what Means they use (how unjust, how base soever they be) toward the compassing their Designs: Hence they trample upon Right, they violate all Laws and Rules of Conscience, they falsify their Trusts, they betray their Friends, they supplant their Neighbour; they flatter and collogue, they wind about, and shuffle any way, they detract from the worth and vertue of any Man, they forge and vent odious Slanders, they commit any sort of Wrong and Outrage, they (without regard or remorse) do any thing which seemeth to further their Design.

This is the great Source of Uncharitableness, for from hence Men affect no Man otherwise, than he seemeth able to serve their turn; the Poor therefore is ever slighted and neglected by them as unserviceable, the Rich only is minded and respected as capable to promote their Ends, they become hard-hearted toward others; not considering or commiserating their Case; they will part with nothing from themselves to those who need their Relief; they delight in nothing which doth not make for their Advantage; All their shews of Friendship and Respect are mercenary, and mere Trade; they do nothing *gratis*, or for Love.

This is the great Root of all the Disorders and Mischiefs in the World; this Self-love prompteth Men to those turbulent Scramblings and Scufflings, whereby good Order is confounded; this engageth them to desert their Stations, to transgress their Bounds; to invade and encroach upon others with Fraud and Violence: Did Men with any conscionable Moderation mind and pursue their own private Interest, all those fierce Animosities, those fiery Contentions, those bitter Emulations,



tions, those rancorous Grudges, those calumnious Supplantings, those perfidious Cozenages, those outrageous Violences, those factious Confederacies, those seditious Murmurings and tumultuous Clamours would vanish and cease; Self-Interest it is that gives life and nourishment to all such Practices, the which embroil the World in Discord and Disorder. It is not out of pure Madness or wanton Humour that commonly Men engage themselves and others in those base and troublesome Courses, but out of design to get by it; hope of Gain to be raked out of publick Ruins and Disorders, is the Principle that moveth them, the Reward they propound to themselves for their Pains in meddling, toward the promoting them; like those who set fire on the Town, that they may get Opportunity to rifle and pillage.

—nullum  
furor egit  
in arma.  
Bella petunt  
magna viâ  
mercede.—

He that taketh himself to be as but one Man (naturally like and equal to others) conceiving that he ought to consider the Interest and right of other Men in the same Rank with his own, that he in reason should be contented with that share which ariseth to him by fair means; who thence resolveth to be satisfied with his own Lot, to abide quiet in his Station, to yield the same Deference and Compliance to others which he can presume, or pretend to receive from them; who desires only to enjoy the Gifts of Providence, and the Fruits of his Industry; in a due Subordination to the Publick Peace and Welfare; he will not easily strive or struggle for Preferments, he will not foment Emulations or Factions for his Advantage, he will never design to cozen or supplant, to detract or calumniate for Advancement of his Ends; he thence will not contribute to the Mischiefs and Troubles in the World.

Ut quisque maxime ad suum commodum referat quæcumque agit, ita minime est ut bonus; ut qui virtutem præmio metiantur, nullam virtutem nisi malitiam putant. Sc. Cicero de Leg. 1.

Self-Interest therefore is the great Enemy to the Common-weal; that which perverteth all Right, which confoundeth all Order, which spoileth all the Convenience and Comfort of Society.

It is a Practice indeed (this Practice of pursuing Self-Interest so vehemently, so especially above all things) which is looked upon and cried up as a clear and certain Point of Wisdom; the only solid Wisdom, in Comparison whereto, those Precepts which prescribe the Practice of strict Justice, ingenuous Humanity, free Charity, are but pedantical Titles, or Notions merely chimerical; So the World now, more than ever, seemeth to judge; and accordingly to act; and thence is the State of Things visibly so bad, and calamitous; thence so little Honesty in Dealings, thence so little Settlement in Affairs are discernible. But how false that Judgment is, will appear, if the Case be weigh'd in the Balance of pure Reason; and most foolish it will appear, being scanned according to the Principles of Religion.

In Reason, is it not very absurd, that any Man should look upon himself as more than a single Person; that he should prefer himself before another, to whom he is not in any respect superiour; that he should advance his own Concernment above the publick Benefit, which comprehendeth his Good, and without which his Good cannot subsist? Can any Man rationally conceive, that he can firmly thrive, or persist in a quiet and sweet Condition, when he graspeth to himself more than is due or fitting, when he provoketh against himself the Emulation, the Competition, the Opposition, the Hatred and Obloquy of all, or of many other Persons?

May not any Man reasonably have the same Apprehensions and Inclinations as we may have? May not any Man justly proceed in the same manner as we may do? Will they not, seeing us mainly to affect our private Interest, be induced, and in a manner forced to do the like? Thence what End can there be of propping, and scrambling for Things? And in the Confusion thence arising, what Quiet, what Content can we enjoy?

Again; Doth not Nature, by implanting in our Constitution a love of Society, and aversion from Solitude, inclinations to Pity and Humanity, pleasant Complacencies in obliging and doing Courtesies to others, appetites of Honour and good Esteem from others, aptness to approve and like the Practices of Justice, of Fidelity, of Courtesie, of Beneficence, Capacities to yield Succour and Benefit to our Brethren, dictate unto us, that our Good is inseparably connected and complicated with the Good of others, so that it cannot, without its own impairing,

subsist



subsist alone, or be severed from the Good of others; no more than a Limb can, without Suffering and Destruction, be torn from the whole?

Is there not to all Men in some Measure, to some Men in a higher Degree, a Generosity innate, most lovely and laudable to all; which disposeth Men, with their own pain, hazard, and detriment, to succour and relieve others in Distress, to serve the Publick, and promote the Benefit of Society; so that inordinately to regard private Interest, doth thwart the Reason and Wisdom of Nature?

*Nec sibi, sed toti natum se credere mundo.  
—nullusque Catonis in altis  
Subrepsit, partemque tulit sibi nata vor-  
luptas.*

St. Paul, Rom. 9.

The Frame of our Nature indeed speaketh, That we are not born for our selves; We shall find Man, if we contemplate him, to be a nobler Thing than to have been designed to serve himself, or to satisfy his single Pleasure; his Endowments are too excellent, his Capacities too large for so mean and narrow Purposes. How pitiful a Creature were Man, if this were all he was made for; how sorry a Faculty were Reason, if it served not to better Uses! He debaseth himself, he disgraceth his Nature, who hath so low Conceits, and pursueth so petty Designs.

Nay, even a true regard to our own private Good, will engage us not inordinately to pursue Self-Interest; it being much hugged, will be smothered and destroyed.

As we are all born Members of the World, as we are compacted into the Common-wealth, as we are incorporated into any Society, as we partake in any Conversation or Company; so by mutual Support, Aid, Defence, Comfort, not only the common Welfare first, but our particular Benefit consequently doth subsist; by hindring or prejudicing them, the Publick first, in Consequence our particular doth suffer: Our thriving by the common Prejudice, will in the End turn to our own Loss. As if one Member sucketh too much Nourishment to it self, and thence swelleth into an exorbitant Bulk, the whole thence incurreth Disease, so coming to perish, or languish; whence consequently that irregular Member will fall into a participation of Ruin or Decay; so it is in the State of human Corporations, he that in ways unnatural, or unjust (for Justice is that in human Societies, which Nature is in the rest of Things) draweth unto himself the Juice of Profit or Pleasure, so as thence to grow beyond his due size, doth thereby not only create Distempers in the publick Body, but worketh Mischief and Pain to himself; he must not imagine to escape feeling somewhat of the Inconvenience and Misery which ariseth from Publick Convulsions and Disorders.

So doth Reason plainly enough dictate; and Religion with clearer Evidence, and greater Advantage discovereth the same.

Its express Precepts are, that we should aim to love our Neighbour as our selves, and therefore should tender his Interests as our own; that we should not in competition with the greater Good of our Neighbour, regard our own lesser Good; that we should not seek our own Things, but concern our selves in the Good of others; that we should not consult our own Ease and Pleasure, but should contentedly bear the Burthens of our Brethren: *Look not every Man to his own things, but every Man also to the things of others; Let no Man seek his own, but every Man another's Wealth; Bear one anothers Burthens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ: Charity seeketh not its own;* these are Apostolical Precepts and Aphorisms; these are fundamental Rules and Maxims of our Holy Religion.

Phil. 2. 4.  
1 Cor. 10. 24.  
Gal. 2. 6.  
1 Cor. 13. 5.

It chargeth us industriously to employ our Pains, liberally to expend our Goods, yea, (in some Cases) willingly to expose and devote our Lives for the Benefit of our Brethren.

It recommendeth to us the Examples of those who have underwent unspeakable Pains, Losses, Disgraces, Troubles, and Inconveniences of all kinds for the furthering the Good of others; the Examples of our Lord, and of his Apostles, who never in any Case regarded their own Interests, but spent and sacrificed themselves to the publick Welfare of Mankind.

It representeth us not only as Brethren of one Family, who should therefore kindly favour, assist, and grace one another, but as Members of one spiritual Body (Members one of another) compacted by the closest Bands of common Alliance, Affection, and Interest, whose Good much consisteth in the Good of each other, who should together rejoice, and condole with one another; who should care for one anothers Good as for our own; looking upon our selves to gain by the Advantage, to thrive in the Prosperity, to be refreshed with the Joy, to be graced

Rom. 12. 5.  
1 Cor. 12. 25.  
Rom. 12. 15.



ced with the Honour, to be endamaged by the Losses, to be afflicted with the Crosses of our Brethren; so that *If (as St. Paul saith) one Member suffer, all the Members suffer with it; if one Member be honoured, all the Members rejoice with it.* 1 Cor. 12. 26.

These which I have already handled, are the principal Kinds of vitious Self-Love; there are farther some special Acts of kin to them, sprouting from the same Stock; which I shall touch: Such as *Vain-glory, Arrogance, Talking of ones self, Thinking about ones self.* Of these I shall treat more briefly.

## SERMON XXXI.

### Of Vain-glory, Arrogance, Talking and Thinking of ones Self.

2 TIM. III. 2.

*For Men shall be lovers of themselves, &c.*

*Of Vain-glory.*

**W**HEN a regard to the Opinion, or the desire of the Esteem of Men is the main Principle from which their Actions do proceed, or the chief End which they propound to themselves: Instead of Conscience of Duty, Love and Reverence of God, hope of the Rewards promised, a sober regard to their true Good, this is *Vain-glory*. Such was the Vain-glory of the *Pharisees*, Matt. 6. 9.; who fasted, who prayed, who gave Alms, who *did all their works that they might be seen of Men*, and from them obtain the Reward of Estimation and Applause: Matt. 23. 5. This is that which St. Paul forbiddeth; *Let nothing be done out of strife, or vain-glory.* Phil. 2. 3.

When Men affect and delight in Praise, from mean or indifferent things; as from secular Dignity, Power, Wealth, Strength, Beauty, Wit, Learning; Eloquence, Wisdom or Craft: as, *There are many (saith the Psalmist) that boast themselves in the multitude of their Riches.* Nebuchadnezzar was raised with the Conceit of having built a Palace for the Glory of His Majesty. Herod was puff'd with Applause for his Oration, the *Philosophers* were vain in the Esteem procured by their Pretence to Wisdom, the *Pharisees* were elevated with the Praise accruing from external Acts of Piety (Fasting twice a Week, making long Prayers, tything Mint and Cumin;) all which things being in themselves of little Worth, the affecting of Praise from them is manifestly frivolous and vain. Honour should be affected only from true Vertue, and really good Works.

Those who seek Glory from evil things (*who glory in their shame*) from pre- sumptuous Transgression of God's Law (*Hectorly* Profaneness and Debauchery) from outrageous Violence, from over-reaching Craft, or from any bad Quality, are not only Vain-glorious, but Impudent. Rom. 2. 7.

When Men affect Praise immoderately, not being content with that measure of good Reputation, which naturally doth arise from a vertuous and blameless Life.

As all other Goods, so this should be affected moderately.

It is not worth Industry, or a direct Aim.

When they are unwilling to part with the Esteem of Men, upon any Accompt, but rather will desert their Duty, than endure Disgrace; prizing the Opinion of Men before the Favour and Approbation of God: As it is said of those *Rulers*, who believed in our Lord, but because of the *Pharisees* did not confess him, that they might not be put out of the Synagogue, for they loved the glory of Men, rather than the glory.



Joh. 5. 44. *glory that is of God.* And those to whom our Saviour said; *How can ye believe, who receive glory from one another, but do not seek the glory that is of God?*

When they pursue it irregularly, are cunning and politick to procure it; hunt for it in oblique ways, lay Gins, Traps, and Baits for it; such are Ostentation of things commendable, fair Speeches, kind Looks and Gestures, devoid of Sincerity, &c. such ways ambitious and popular Men do use.

To Eutimio  
in the Soliloquy  
in the Naz. Ep. 63.

This Practice is upon many Accompts vain and culpable, and it produceth great Inconvenience.

1. It is vain, because unprofitable. Is it not a foolish thing for a Man to affect that which little concerneth him to have, which having he is not considerably benefited? Such manifestly is the good Opinion of Men; how doth that reach us; do we feel the Commotions of their Fancy; doth their Breath blow us any good?

Qui dedit hoc  
hodie, cras au-  
ferat idem.

2. It is vain, because uncertain. How easily are the Judgments of Men alter'd? How fickle are their Conceits? The Wind of Heaven is not more fleeting and variable than the Wind of popular Air. In a trice the Case is turned with them; they admire and scorn, they approve and condemn, they applaud and reproach, they court and persecute the same Person, as their Fancy is casually moved, or as Fortune doth favour a Person. Histories are full of Instances of Persons, who have been now the Favourites of the People, presently the Objects of their Hatred and Obloquy.

Stultus ho-  
mo  
Sepe dat in-  
dignu.

3. It is vain, because unsatisfactory. How can a Man be satisfied with the Opinion of bad Judges; who esteem a Man without good grounds, commonly for things not deserving regard; who cannot discern those things which really deserve esteem, good Principles, and honest Intention? These only God can know, these only wise and good Men can well guess at: It is therefore vain much to prize any Judgment but that of God, and of wise Men, which are but few. *Praise becometh not the Mouth of a Fool.*

Falsus honor  
juvat, &c.  
Quem nisi  
mendosum?

How also can a Man rationally be pleased with the Commendation of others, who is sensible of his so great Defects, and conscious to himself of so many Mischances? Which considering he should be ashamed to receive, he should in himself blush to own any Praise.

4. It is vain, because fond. It is ugly and unseemly to Men; they despise nothing more than acting out of this Principle. It misbecometh a Man to perform things for so pitiful a Reward, or to look upon it as a valuable Recompence for his Performances; there being Considerations so vastly greater to induce and encourage him; the Satisfaction of Conscience, the pleasing God, and procuring his Favour; the obtaining eternal Happiness.

Phil. 2. 13.

5. It is vain, because unjust. If we seek Glory to our selves, we wrong God thereby, to whom the Glory thereof is due. If there be in us any natural Endowment considerable (Strength, Beauty, Wit) it is from God, the Author of our Being and Life. Is there any supervenient or acquiste Perfection (as Skill, Knowledge, Wisdom) it is from God, who gave us the Means and Opportunities of getting it, who guided our Proceeding, and blessed our Industry: Is there any Advantage of Fortune belonging to us (as Dignity, Power, Wealth,) it is the Gift of God, who dispenseth these Things, who disposeth all Things by his Providence: Is there any virtuous Disposition in us, or any good Work performed

by us; it is the Production of God, *who worketh in us to will, and to do according to his good Pleasure:* Have we any Good that we can call our own; that we have independently and absolutely made, or purchased to our selves; if not any, why do we assume to our selves the Glory of it, as if we were its Makers or Authors?

1 Cor. 4. 7.  
John 3. 27.

'Tis St. Paul's Expostulation; *Who made thee to differ? What hast thou, which thou didst not receive? And if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?*

Acts 12. 23.

This is that which maketh this Vice so odious to God, who is sensible of the Injury done him, in robbing him of his due Honour: How sensible he is, he shewed in that great Instance of smiting Herod with a miraculous Vengeance; because he did not give the glory to God, but arrogated Glory to himself, receiving with Complacence the profane Flatteries of the People. He hath said, *I will not give my Glory to another.*

6. It



6. It is vain, because mischievous. It corrupteth our Mind with a leud Pleasure, which choaketh the purer Pleasures of a good Conscience, spiritual Joy and Peace.

It incenseth God's Displeasure, who cannot endure to see us act out of so mean and base a Principle.

It depriveth us of the Reward due to good Works, performed out of pure Conscience, and other genuine Principles of Piety. *Ἀμύνηται τὸν μισθόν* They have Matt. 6. 14. *their Reward.*

7. It is vain, because unbeseeming us.

It is observable, that the Word *ἡμι* signifieth to praise or applaud, and also to infatuate or make mad.

Glory doth sit unhand somely upon us, who are so weak and frail, who are so impure and sinful, who are so liable to reproach and blame: 'Tis like Purple on a Beggar—a *Panegyrick* upon a Fly. When all is said that can be well of us, we are ridiculous, because a thousand times more might be said to our Disparagement and Disgrace. For one good Quality, we have many bad; for one good Deed, we have done numberless Evil. The best Things we have or do, yield greater Matter of Dispraise than Commendation, being full of Imperfection and Blemish. Job 12. 17. Isa. 44. 24. Eccles. 7. 8.

Absolutely so; comparatively much more; what are we in comparison to God; whose Excellency if we consider, and our Distance from his Perfections, how can we admit Commendation? How can we take any share of that which is wholly his due?

If we consider even the blessed Angels and Saints, and how far short we come of them; what can we say, but praise them who are so worthy, and abhor our selves who are so vile?

Seeing there are such Objects of Praise, how can it be conferred on a mortal, vile, wretched Creature?

### Of Arrogance.

When a Man (puffed up with Conceit of his own Abilities, or unmeasurably affecting himself) doth assume to himself that which doth not belong to him; more than in Reason and Justice is his due, in any kind, more Honour, more Power, more Wisdom, &c.

When he encroacheth on the Rights, invadeth the Liberties, intrudeth into the Offices, intermedleth with the Businesses, imposeth on the Judgments of others, When he will be advising, teaching, guiding, checking, controlling others without their leave or liking.

When he will unduly be exercising Judgment and Censure upon the Persons, Qualities, and Actions of his Neighbour.

These are Instances and Arguments of vitious Self-Love. He that doth rightly understand, and duly affect himself, will contain himself within his own Bounds, will mind his own Affairs, will suffer every Man undisturbedly to use his own right and liberty in judging and acting.

The Effects of this Practice are; Dissentions, Dissatisfactions, Grudges, &c. for Men cannot endure such fond and unjust Usurpations upon their Rights, their Liberties, their Reputations.

### Of Talking of ones self.

*Ῥησιολογία*, Talking about ones self, is an Effect and manifest Sign of immoderate Self-Love.

It may seem a very slender and particular Matter, but is of great use to be considered and corrected.

To talk much of ones self; of his own Qualities, of his Concernments, of his Actions; so as either down-rightly to commend ones self, or obliquely to insinuate grounds of Commendation; to catch at Praise; or however to drive on our own Designs and Interests thereby.

'Tis an Argument of Self-Love; proceeding from a fulness of Thought concerning ones self; and a fond Affection to ones own things, *Out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh*; assuredly we think much of that, and we like it



it greatly, concerning which we are prompt to discourse: The Imaginations and Affections discharge themselves at the Mouth.

**This is a foolish and hurtful Practice. For,**

1. It is vain, and hath no Effect. We thereby seek to recommend our selves to the Opinion of Men ; but we fail therein ; for our Words gain no Belief. For no Man is looked upon as a good Judge, or a faithful Witness in his own Case ; A good Judge, and a faithful Witness must be indifferent, and disinterested ; but every Man is esteemed to be favourable, to be partial in his Opinion concerning himself ; to be apt to strain a Point of Truth and Right in passing Testimony or Sentence upon himself : He therefore that speaketh of himself is not believed, his Words have no good effect on the Hearers : It is true what the *Wiseman* observeth :

Prov. 20, 6.

2 Cor. 12. 1

Most Men will proclaim every one his own Goodness, but a faithful Man who can find? (but it is hard to find one, who in making Report, or passing Judgment concerning himself will be faithful and just.) *Καυχῆσαι ἑ σὺν ἑαυτῷ μοι.*

2. Yea it usually hath a contrary Effect, and destroyeth that which it aimeth at. Self-commendation is so far from procuring a good Opinion, that it breedeth an evil one.

Men have a Prejudice against what is said, as proceeding from a suspected Witness; one who is biased by Self-Love, and bribed by Self-Interest to impose upon them. *Not he that commendeth himself is approved.*

2 Cor. 10.18

2Cor. 10. 13

ἐχὶ τὰ ἄμ-  
 ρα καὶ χι-  
 σσόμενοι

It is fastidious, as impertinent, insignificant, and insipid ; spending time, and beating their Ears to no purpose ; they take it for an Injury to suppose them so weak as to be moved by such Words, or forced into a good Conceit.

It is odious and invidious : For all Men do love themselves, no less than we  
our selves : And cannot endure to see those who affect to advance themselves, and  
reign in our Opinion.

It prompteth them to speak Evil of us ; to search for Faults to cool and check us.

It is therefore a preposterous and vain way to think of gaining Credit and Love: Men thereby infallibly lose or depress themselves.

Of all Words, those which express our selves, and our Things; *I*, and *mine*, &c. are the least pleasing to Mens Ears.

It spoileth Conuersation : For he that loveth to speak of himself, doth least love to hear others speak of themselves ; and so is not attentive.

If a Man have worthy Qualities, and do good Deeds; let them speak for him; they will of themselves extort Commendation; his Silence about them, his seeming to neglect them will enhance their Worth in the Opinion of Men. Prating about them, obtruding them upon Men will mar their Credit; inducing Men to think them done not out of Love to Vertue, but for a vain-glorious Design. Thus did *Cicero*, thus have many others blasted the Glory of their vertuous Deeds.

Γέγονα ἄφρων

2 Cor. 12:11

2 Cor. 11. 17

3. Supposing you get the Belief, and the Praise you aim at, to have Complacency therein is bad, or dangerous; 'tis a fond Satisfaction, 'tis a vicious Pleasure; it puffeth up, it befooleth.

4. It is against Modesty. It argueth the Man hath a high Opinion of himself; If he believe himself what he saith, he hath so; if not, why would he persuade others to have it?

Modesty cannot without Pain hear others speak of him; nor can with any Grace receive Commendations; it is therefore great Impudence to speak of himself, and to seek Praise.

5. We may observe it to be a great Temptation to speak falsely. Men, when they affect Commendation, will gladly have it to the utmost; are loth to wrong themselves, or to lose any thing; they will therefore at least speak to the extreme Bounds of what may be said in their own Behalf; and while they run upon the extreme Borders of Truth, it is hard to stop their Carrier, so as not to launch forth into Falshood: 'Tis hard to stand upon the Brink, without falling into the Ditch.

It is therefore advisable in our Discourse to leave our selves out as much as may be; never, if we can help it, to say, *I, mine, &c.* never seeking, commonly shunning, and declining Occasion to speak of our selves: It will bring much Convenience and Benefit to us.

**Our**



Our Discourse will not be offensive ; we shall decline Envy, and Obloquy ; we shall avoid being talked of ; we shall escape Temptations of Vanity ; we shall better attend to what others say, &c.

If we will be speaking of our selves, it is allowable to speak sincerely and unaffectedly concerning our Infirmities and Faults ; as St. Paul does of himself.

2 Cor. 12. 5.

There are some Cases wherein a Man may commend himself ; as in his own Defence ; to maintain his Authority ; to urge his Example, &c. so doth St. Paul often. He calleth it Folly to Boast (because generally such it is) yet he doth it for those Ends.

Plut. 11. 30.

1 Cor. 13. 12.

Let another praise thee, and not thine own Mouth, a Stranger, and not thine own Lips. Prov. 27. 6.

### Thinking of our selves.

Thinking of our selves, with Glee and Pleasure ; this is a great Nourisher of immoderate Self-Love, for the more they indulge to a gazing upon themselves with Delight, the more they grow in Love; the more passionately they come to dote on themselves.

It is good to reflect inward, and to view our Souls ; but we should do it so, as to find a wholesome Displeasure and Regret in beholding our selves so foul and impure, so weak and defectuous, so ugly and deformed ; if we do thus, we shall not over-love our selves.

### Some general Remedies of Self-Love.

1. To reflect upon our selves seriously and impartially, considering our natural Nothingness, Meanness, Baseness, Imperfection, Infirmity, Unworthiness : The meanness and imperfection of our Nature, the defects and deformities of our Souls, the failings and misdemeanors of our Lives. He that doth this cannot surely find himself lovely ; and must therefore take it for very absurd to dote on himself. He will rather be induced to dislike, despise, abhor and loath himself.

2. To consider the loveliness of other Beings superiour to us ; comparing them with our selves, and observing how very far in Excellency, Worth, and Beauty they transcend us ; which if we do, we must appear no fit Objects of Love, we must be check'd in our Dotage, and diverted from this fond Affection to our selves. It cannot but dazzle our Eyes, and dull our Affections to our selves.

If we view the Qualities and Examples of other Men, who in Worth, in Wisdom, in Vertue, and Piety do far excell us ; their noble Endowments, their heroical Achievements ; what they have done and suffered in Obedience to God (their strict Temperance and Austerity, their laborious Industry, their Self-denial, their Patience, &c.) how can we but in Comparison despise and loath our selves ?

If we consider the blessed Angels and Saints, in Glory and Bliss ; their Purity, their Humility, their Obedience, how can we think of our selves without Contempt and Abhorrence ?

Especially if we contemplate the Perfection, the Purity, the Majesty of God, how must this infinitely debase us in our Opinion concerning our selves, and consequently diminish our fond Affection towards Things so vile and unworthy ?

3. To study the Acquisition and Improvement of Charity toward God and our Neighbour. This will employ and transfer our Affections ; these drawing our Souls outward, and settling them upon other Objects will abolish or abate the perverse Love toward our selves.

4. To consider, that we do owe all we are and have to the free Bounty and Grace of God ; hence we shall see that nothing of Esteem or Affection is due to our selves ; but all to him, who is the Fountain and Authour of all our Good.

5. To direct our Minds wholly toward those Things which rational Self-Love requireth us to regard and seek : To concern our selves in getting Vertue, in performing our Duty, in promoting our Salvation, and arriving to Happiness : This will divert us from Vanity : A sober Self-Love will stifle the other fond Self-Love.



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# SERMON XXXII.

## Provide things honest in the fight of all M E N.

R O M. XII. 17.

*Provide things honest in the fight of all Men.*

Isa. 3. 9.

**T**HE World apparently is come to that pass, that Men commonly are afraid or asham'd of Religious Practice, hardly daring to own their Maker, by a conscientious Observance of his Laws. While Profane-ness and Wickedness are grown outrageously bold, so that many *declare their sin as Sodom*; Piety and Vertue are become pitifully bashful; so that how few have the Heart and the Face openly to maintain a due Regard to them; Men in nothing appear so reserved and shy, as in avowing their Conscience, in discovering a sense of their Duty, in expressing any fear of God, any love of Goodness, any concern for their own Soul. 'Tis Wisdom, as they conceive, to compound with God, and to collude with the World; reserving for God some Place in their Heart, or yielding unto him some private Acknowledgment; while in their publick Demeanor they conform to the World, in commission of Sin, or neglect of their Duty; supposing, that God may be satisfied with the invisible Part of his Service, while Men are gratified by visible Compliance with their ungracious Humours.

Such Proceeding is built on divers very fallacious, absurd, and inconsistent Grounds or Pretences; whereby Men egregiously do abuse themselves, and would impose on others; namely, these, and the like:

They would not by a fair shew and semblance of Piety give cause to be taken for Hypocrites; whereas by dissembling their Conscience, and seeming to *have no fear of God before their Eyes*, they incur an Hypocrisie, no less criminal in Nature, but far more dangerous in Consequence, than is that which they pretend to decline.

They would not be apprehended Vain-glorious for affecting to serve God in the View of Men; whereas often at the Bottom of their Demeanour a most wretched and worse than *Pharisaical* Vain-glory doth lie; They forbearing the Performance of their Duty merely to shun the Censure, or to gain the Respect of the vilest and vaineft Persons.

They would be deemed exceeding honest and sincere, because forsooth all their Piety is cordial, pure, and void of sinister Regards to popular Esteem; whereas partial Integrity is gross Nonsense; whereas no pretence can be more vain, than that we hold a faithful Friendship, or hearty Respect for God, whom we openly disclaim, or disregard; whereas also it is easily discernible, that although their Piety is not, yet their Impiety is popular, and affected to ingratiate with Men.

They would be taken for Men of brave, courageous, and masculine Spirits, exalted above the Weaknesses of Superstition and Scrupulosity; whereas indeed out of the basest Cowardise, and a dread to offend sorry People, they have not a Heart to act according to their Duty, their Judgment, their best Interest.

Isa. 65. 3.  
Jer. 6. 17.  
8. 12.

They would seem very modest in concealing their Vertue; while yet they are most impudent in disclosing their want of Conscience; while they are so presumptuous toward God, as to *provoke him to his face* by their Disobedience; while they are not asham'd to wrong and scandalize their Brethren by their ill Behaviour.

They



They would not be uncivil or discourteous in thwarting the Mind and Pleasure of their Company; as if in the mean time they might be most rude toward God in affronting his Will and Authority; as if any Rule of Civility could oblige a Man to forfeit his Salvation; as if it were not rather most cruel Discourtesie, and barbarous Inhumanity to countenance or encourage any Man in Courses tending to his Ruin.

They would not be singular and uncouth in discomfiting from the common Road, or Fashion of Men; as if it were better to leave the common Duty, than the common Faults of Men; as if Wisdom and Vertue were ever the most vulgar Things; as if the Way to Heaven were the broadest and the most beaten Way; as if Rarity should abate the Price of good Things; as if Conspiracy in Rebellion against God might justify or excuse the Fact; as if it were adviseable to march to Hell in a Troop, or comfortable to lie there for ever among the damned Crew of Associates in Wickedness.

They cannot endure to be accounted Zealots or Bigots in Religion; As if a Man could love or fear God too much; or be over-faithful and careful in serving him; as if to be most earnest and solicitous (not in promoting our own Fancies, but) in discharging our plain Duties, could be justly reproachable; or were not indeed highly commendable.

These things I may hereafter fully declare; in the mean time it is manifest that such a Practice is extremely prejudicial to Religion and Goodness; so that it may be very useful to employ our Meditations upon this Text of the *Apostle*, which directly doth oppose and prohibit it.

The same Text he elsewhere (in his Second *Epistle* to the *Corinthians*) doth repeat, in the same Terms (only inserting a Clause more fully explaining his Sense) backing his Precept with his own Example; for, We (saith he there) did so manage the Business of collecting and dispensing Alms, as to avoid that any Man <sup>2 Cor. 8. 21</sup> should blame us in this abundance, which is administered by us; providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but in the sight of Men.

The Words do imply a Precept of very large Extent, and touching a great Part of our Duty; even all thereof which is publick and visible; for which we are accomptable to the World, whereof Man can take any cognisance; which concerneth all our Speech and Conversation, all our Dealing and Commerce, all our Deportment relating to human Society, civil or spiritual.

I shall first a little consider its meaning and design; then I shall propose Reasons and Inducements to its observance; then I shall declare the Folly of those Principles and Pretences which obstruct that observance.

I. The Meaning of it is, that we should have a special Care of our external <sup>Δεξιότηας</sup> Demeanour and Conversation, which cometh under the View and Observation of <sup>Phil. 2. 15</sup> Men; that it be exempted from any Offence or Blame, yea, that it be comely and <sup>Ἀνίστατον</sup> commendable. <sup>Col. 1. 22.</sup>

The Terms, in which it is expressed, are notably emphatical: We are directed <sup>προνοεῖν</sup> *to provide*, to use a Providence and Forecast in the Case: E'er we undertake any Design, we should deliberate with our selves, and consider on what Theatre we shall act, what Persons will be Spectators, what Conceits our Practice may raise in them, and what Influence probably it will have on them. We should not rush on into the publick View, with a precipitant Rashness, or blind Negligence, or contemptuous Disregard, not caring who standeth in our way, who marketh what we do, what Consequence our Proceeding may have on the Score of its being publick and visible: We should advise before-hand, lay our Business, and on set Purpose order our Behaviour with a regard to those, to whose Sight and Notice we expose it; foreseeing how our Actions may affect or incline them. So we must provide; what Things? <sup>καλὰ</sup> Things fair and handsome; Things not only good, innocent, and inoffensive to the Sight of Men; but goodly, pleasant, and acceptable to well-disposed Beholders; such as our *Apostle* doth elsewhere recommend, when he chargeth us to regard, <sup>ὅσα σπουδὰ</sup> *whatever things are venerable*, <sup>ὅσα μεσσηνία</sup> *whatever things are lovely*, <sup>ὅσα εὐφημία</sup> *whatever things are of good report*, <sup>ἃ καὶ ἐπαινεῖται</sup> *whatever things are laudable*. And when he doth exhort us to walk <sup>ὡς ἄνθρωποι</sup> *handsomely and decently*, in a comely Garb and Fashion of <sup>Rom. 13. 13.</sup> Life: <sup>1 Thess. 4. 12.</sup>



Life : This may add an Obligation to some Things not directly prescribed by God, which yet may serve to adorn Religion ; but it cannot detract any thing from what God hath commanded : It doth comprehend all Instances of Piety and Vertue, practicable before Men ; it certainly doth exclude all Commission of Sin, and Omission of Duty, for that nothing can be fair or handsome, which is ugly in God's Sight, which doth not suit to his Holy Will.

Such things we must provide, *ἑνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων*, before all Men ; not only before some Men, to whom we bear a particular respect, of whom we stand in awe, upon whom we have a design ; but universally before all Men ; as having a due Consideration of all those, upon whom our Deportment may have influence ; not despising or disregarding the Observation of the meanest or most inconsiderable Person whatever.

But in this Practice, to avoid Misapprehensions, we must distinguish ; for it is not required, that we should do all Things openly, nor intended that we should do any thing vainly ; but that we should act constantly according to the Nature and Reason of things, with upright and pure Intention : The *Apostle* doth not mean, that in our Practice we should resemble the *Pharisees*, whom our Lord reproveth for doing their Alms before Men, for loving to pray standing in the Synagogues, for doing all their Works to be seen of Men ; performing those Acts of Piety openly in the Corners of the Street, which should have been done secretly in the Closet ; and so doing them out of Vanity, and ambitious Design, to procure the good Opinion and Praise of Men : He doth not intend, that we should assume a formal Garb of singular Vertue ; that we should aim to seem better than we are, counterfeiting any Point of Religion, or Vertue ; that we should affect to appear even as good as we are, exposing all our Piety to common View : That we should sound a Trumpet before us, making an Ostentation of any good Deeds, catching at Reputation, or Applause for them ; that we should do any commendable thing chiefly to obtain the good Opinion of the World, or to escape its Censure ; infinitely far it was from the *Apostle's* Intention, that we should be like those whited Sepulchres, which appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead mens bones and all Uncleanness : that is, like those *Pharisees*, who did outwardly appear righteous, but within were full of Hypocrisy and Iniquity : No ;

In some Cases we must be reserved, and keep our Vertue close to our selves ; and ever under a fair Shew there must be a real Substance of Good, together with an honest Intention of Heart ; a good Conscience must always lie at the Bottom of a good Conversation ; the outside must be good, but the best side must be inward ; we must endeavour to sanctifie our Life and Conversation, but we must especially labour to purifie our Hearts and Affections.

Join the Precept with others duly limiting it, and it doth import, that with pure Sincerity, and unaffected Simplicity (void of any sinister, or sordid Design) we should in all Places, upon all Occasions, in all Matters carefully discharge that Part of our Duty which is publick, according to its Nature, Season, and Exigency, that is publickly ; not abstaining from the Practice of those good Deeds, which cannot otherwise than openly be well performed ; or the conspicuous performance whereof is absolutely needful in regard to God's Law and the Satisfaction of our Conscience, is plainly serviceable to the Glory of God, is very conducive to the Edification of our Neighbour, or which may be useful to good Purposes concurrent with those principal Ends : We should, as good Trees, from a deep root of true Piety, in due season, naturally as it were shoot forth good Fruits, not only pleasant to the sight, but savoury to the taste, and wholesome for use ; as St. Paul, who, as he saith of himself, that he did provide things honest in the sight of all men, so he also doth affirm, that his Rejoicing was this, the Testimony of his Conscience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity—he had his Conversation in the World.

There are indeed some Duties, or Works of Piety and Vertue, the Nature whereof directeth, that in the Practice of them we should be reserved ; such as those wherein the World is not immediately concerned, and which may with best Advantage be transacted between God and our own Souls ; as private Devotion, Meditation on God's Word and Will, the Discussion of our Consciences, voluntary Exercises of Penitence, and the like ; such also be those, wherein the Intervention or Notice of few Persons is required ; as Deeds of particular Charity in



in dispensing Alms, good Advice, friendly Reproof; the which sort of Duties our Lord hath taught us to perform *in secret*, or as closely as we may; studiously keeping our Observance of them from the Eyes of Men; thereby assuring our Sincerity to our selves, and guarding our Practice from any Taint of Vanity, or Suspicion of Hypocrisy; as also in some Cases avoiding to cause Prejudice or Offence to our Neighbours: *Take heed* (saith our Lord) *that ye do not pour Alms before Men*; and *Thou when thou prayest, enter into thy Closet*; and *Thou when thou fastest, anoint thine Head, and wash thy Face, that thou appear not unto Men to fast*; and, *If thy Brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his Fault between thee and him alone.*

But there are divers other Duties, the Discharge whereof necessarily is notorious and visible; the Publick being the Stage on which they are to be acted; the transaction of them demanding the Entercourse of many Persons, who are the Objects or Instruments of them, or are somewise concerned in them: Such is that negative Duty, of a general Nature, and vast Comprehension, which we may call Innocence: that is a total abstinence from Sin, or forbearance to transgress any divine Command; which is a Part of Job's Character, *That Man was perfect and upright, one that feared God, and eschewed Evil*; the which Duty being to be practised at all Times in every Place, cannot avoid being observable.

Such are also divers positive Duties; for such is the Profession of our Faith in God, and Acknowledgment of his heavenly Truth, revealed in the Gospel of our blessed Saviour; which is filed *confessing our Lord before Men*, and is (as St. Paul telleth us) indispensibly requisite to Salvation.

Such is joining in that publick Adoration, whereby the Honour and Authority of God are upheld in the World, with seemly Expressions of Reverence; the which is to be performed solemnly, and (as the Holy Psalmist speaketh) *in the midst of the Congregation.*

Such is the Zeal in Vindication of God's Honour, when Occasion requireth, from blasphemous Aspersions, or from scandalous Offences against it.

Such are Justice, Equity, Fidelity, and Ingenuity in our Dealings; Meekness, Gentleness, Patience, Kindness, and Courtesie in our Converse; Peaceableness in our Carriage, and charitable Beneficence; the Objects whereof are most general, according to those Apostolical Precepts, *That our Moderation* (of our Equity and Ingenuity) *be known unto all Men*; that we *show all Meekness to all Men*; that we *must not strive*; but *be gentle unto all Men*; that we *be patient toward all Men*; that we *pursue Peace with all Men*; that *As we have opportunity we should do good unto all Men*; should *abound in Love one towards another, and towards all Men*; should *ever follow that which is good both among our selves, and to all Men*; should *liberally distribute to the Saints, and to all Men*; in performing which so general Duties, how can a Man pass incognito, how can he so deal with all Men indiscernibly?

Such are likewise Gravity and Modesty in our Behaviour; Sweetness, Soberness, Aptness to profit and edifie the Hearers in our Discourse; Moderation and Temperance in our corporeal Enjoyments; Industry in our Business and the Works of our Calling, Integrity in the Management of any Office or Trust committed to us; a constant Practice of which Vertues is not only enjoined to us as our particular Duty, but for publick Example.

Such are seasonable Defence of the Truth, and Opposing of Error; the Commendation of Vertue, and Reprehension of notorious Sin, with the like.

Such Things must be practised, because indispensable Duties; but they cannot be done out of Sight, or barring the Observation of Men; they do involve Publickness; they carry a Light and Lustre with them, attracting all Eyes to regard them; it is as impossible to conceal them as to hide the Sun from all the World; or to conceal a City that is set upon a Hill; for nothing (as St. Chrysostom saith) *doth render a Man so illustrious, although he ten thousand times would be hid, as an open practice of Vertue.*

Wherefore the Works of Mercy (saith St. Austin) the Affection of Charity, the Sanctity of Godliness, the Incorruptness of Chastity, the Moderation of Sobriety, these are perpetually to be held, whether we are in the publick, or at home; whether before Men, or in the Closet; whether we speak, or keep silence.

In the Practice of them, 'tis true, we mainly should re-

Οὐδὲν δὲ ἵπταται ἐν τῷ κοινῷ ἀνδρὶ τοῦ  
καὶ μυστικῶς καὶ δακρυῶν βέλῳ. ὡς ἀπε-  
ρὶς ἐκείνῳ. Chrys. in Matt. 5. 16.

Opera misericordiae, affectus charitatis,  
sanctitas pietatis, incorruptio castitatis,  
modestia sobrietatis, semper haec tenenda  
sunt; sive cum in publico sumus, sive  
cum in domo; sive ante homines, sive  
in cubiculo; sive loquentes, sive tacentes,  
Aug. in Ep. 1. Joh. Tract. 8.

spect



— non cum fama sed cum rerum natura deliberandum est. Sen. Ep. 81.

1 Cor. 4. 3. 1 Thess. 2. 4, 5. Gal. 1. 10.

*Si times spectatores non habebis imitatores; debes ergo videri, sed non ad hoc debes facere ut videaris, non ibi debet esse finis gaudii tui, non ibi terminus latitiae tuae, ut putes te totum fructum consecutum esse boni operis, cum visus fueris atque laudatus. Ibid.*

Eph. 6. 6.

Col. 3. 23, 24.

*the Will of God from the Heart; doing it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto Men, knowing that of the Lord we shall receive the reward of the Inheritance.*

Yet nothing in the mean time should hinder us from performing such necessary Duties, strictly and exactly, with our most diligent Care and Endeavour, even in that Light, which their Nature doth carry in it.

How much soever of our Vertue or Piety out of Humility, or Modesty we may conceal; yet we must be careful of discovering any Vice or Irreligion; either by notoriously committing any thing forbidden by God, or omitting any thing commanded by him.

This we should not do upon any Terms, upon any Pretence whatever; No wicked Fashion should engage us, no bad Example should inveigle us, no Favour of Men should allure us, no Terror should scare us thereto; we should not out of Fear, out of Shame, out of Complaisance, out of affected Prudence, or politick Design; out of Deference to the Quality, Dignity, or Authority of any Person; out of regard to any Man's Desire, or Pleasure; We should not, to decline Offence, Envy, Blame, Reproach, Ill-treatment, or upon any such Accompt, comply in any sinful Practice, wave any Duty, neglect any Season of performing a good Deed, whereby we may glorifie God, or edifie our Neighbour, or promote the Welfare of our own Soul.

To such a Practice, according to the intent of St. Paul's Injunction, we are obliged; and thereto we may be induced by divers Considerations; particularly by those which we shall now propose.

*Bona conscientia praeferre vult & conspicit, ipsas nequitia tenebras timet. Sen. Ep. 27.*

1. We may consider, that the Publick is the proper, natural, and due Place of Goodness: It should dwell in the Light, it should walk freely and boldly every where, it should expose it self to open View, that it may receive from rational Creatures its due Approbation, Respect and Praise; it by publickness is advanced, and the more it doth appear, the more beautiful, the more pleasant, the more useful it is; yielding the fairer Lustre, the greater Influence, the better Effects; thereby diffusing and propagating it self, becoming exemplary, instructive and admonitive; drawing Lovers and Admirers to it; exciting and encouraging Men to embrace it; wherefore it is very absurd that it should sculk or sneak; it is a great Damage to the Publick, that it should retire from common notice.

*Omne malum aut timore, aut pudore natura persudat. Tert. Apol. cap. 1. Job 24. 13-17.*

On the other hand, it is proper for Wickedness never to appear, or to shew its Head in view; it should be confined to darkness and Solitude, under guard of its natural Keepers, Shame and Fear; it should be exterminated from all Conversation among rational Creatures, and banished to the infernal Shades: Publickness doth augment and aggravate it; the more it is seen, the more ugly, the more loathsome, the more noxious it is; its odious Shape being disclosed, its noisome Steams being dispersed, its pestilent Effects being conveyed thereby.

Rom. 13. 12. Eph. 5. 11.

John 3. 21. Eph. 5. 13.

Wherefore to smother Vertue (that fair Child of Light) in privacy, and to vent Sin (the works of darkness) openly, is quite to transplace things out of their natural Situation and Order; according to which we are taught by our Lord, that *He that doth truth cometh to the Light, that his Deeds may be manifest*; and by St. Paul, that *Every one, who doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh he to the light, lest his Deeds should be reprov'd*; So indeed it is, and will be, where Conscience retaineth its due Sway and Force; where a due Respect and Reverence are preserved for Goodness.

As that any Good cometh from Detection of Sin, is an accidental Advantage; so that any Mischief doth ever follow the Manifestation of Vertue, is an unnatural



tural Abuse, the which may well be prevented: There can be no Danger of acting any good most evidently, if we do withal act sincerely, having purified our Hearts from dishonest Intention, and from ambitious Vanity; the fear of which should not wholly drive Vertue under the Hatches, and bring Vice upon the Stage. But,

2. We should consider, that we cannot really, in any competent or tolerable measure be good Men, without approving our selves such in our Conversation before Men.

Whatever may be pretended, it commonly doth happen, and it ever is to be suspected that the invisible Piety, which is not accompanied with visible Conscientiousness, is false, or is no Piety at all; or that they who have little Care and Conscience to serve God publickly, have much less to serve him privately; or that such as betray a scandalous Negligence of their Ways, will hardly maintain a careful Watch over their Hearts; for the same Causes (be it profane Infidelity, or looseness of Principles, or supine Incongruity, or Sloth, or Stupidity) which dispose them to disregard God and his Laws before the World, more effectually will incline them to neglect God, and forget their Duty by themselves, where beside their own Conscience, there is no Witness, no Judge, no Censor to encourage, or reproach them: But admit it possible, and put Case, that sometimes the Heart and Conversation may not run parallel; that a Man may better govern his interior Thoughts and Affections, than he doth manage his exterior Behaviour and Actions, that a Man secretly may cleave to God, although he seemeth openly to desert him; yet this will not suffice to constitute, or denominate a good Man; because much of Goodness, as we have shewed, even the nobler half thereof (that Part whereby God is most glorified, and whereby the World is most benefitted) doth lie in open and visible Practice; that Vertue therefore must be very imperfect, that Obedience must be very lame, which is deficient in so great a Part. Jam. 2. 19.

As there can be no fair pretence to Goodness, where so little thereof is conspicuous; so there can be no real Integrity thereof, where so much of Duty is wanting.

Our Lord hath taught us, that *Every Tree is known by its Fruit*; and St. James Luke 6. 44. faith, that *Faith is shewed by Works*; and so it is, that a Man can hardly be good Jam. 2. 18. in any reasonable Degree without appearing such; Impiety may, but Piety cannot be quite concealed: As Gold may be counterfeited (for all is not Gold that glittereth) yet true Gold always doth look like Gold; so although bad Men sometimes may seem good, yet good Men also must seem such, appearing in their own native Temper and Lustre.

Goodness cannot be disguised in the Shape of Evil, because Simplicity and Innocence are essential Ingredients of it; any mixture of notorious Sin, any visible neglect of Duty assuring (yea formerly making) a want of it, or a real Defect therein: It may be daubed with false Aspersions, it may be dimmed by the Breath of unjust, and uncharitable Censures; but wiping them off, its natural Hue certainly will appear.

Wherefore if we would satisfy our selves in our own Consciences, or justify our selves to others, that we are truly good, we must (without Partiality, or distinguishing between publick and private) like the Holy Psalmist, *have respect unto all God's Commandments*; we, like Zachary and Elizabeth, must *walk in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord, blameless*; we must, like David, *accomplish God's Will*; we must observe St. Paul's Rule, *to abstain ἀπὸ παντός εἰδός πορνείας*, from both every kind of evil, and every bad appearance. But farther. (Numb. 15. 39, 40.)  
Psal. 119. 6.  
Luke 1. 6.  
Ποιεῖν πάντα τὰ δεικνύμενα.  
μὲν.  
Acts 13. 22.  
1 Thess. 5. 22.

3. A great Care of our good Behaviour before Men is necessary in regard to Almighty God; whose just Interest is preserved, whose due Homage is payed, whose Honour is promoted thereby; the same being greatly prejudiced and impaired by the contrary Defailance.

It is a clear Point of Justice towards God, as to render all Obedience to him, so particularly that which consisteth in an open Acknowledgment and Service of him; for as he made and doth preserve not only the Heart, but the Tongue, the Members, the whole Man, so all must concur in rendering their Tribute of Reverence and Service to him.



Rom. 12. 1.  
1 Cor. 10. 31.

The *Apostle* doth prescribe, that *whatever we do, we should do all to the glory of God*; and well he might, seeing that to glorify God is indeed to execute the main design of our Creation, to apply our Faculties to their best use, to achieve the most proper and most excellent Work, whereof we are capable; to do that which is the worthiest and happiest Employment of Angels, which all the Company of Heaven with most ardent Desire, with most zealous Ambition, with restless Endeavour doth pursue: And this we cannot better, we cannot otherwise do, than by an apparent good Conversation. For,

He that apparently in all his Actions maketh Conscience of obeying God's Laws, thereby doth evidence his firm Persuasion concerning the Existence and Providence of God, doth adhere to him against all Adversaries of Piety, and all Temptations to Rebellion; doth avow his Sovereign Majesty and Authority; doth yield him due Veneration and Obedience; doth shew right Apprehensions of him, and just Affections towards him; implying that he doth most highly esteem him, doth most heartily love him, doth chiefly dread him, doth repose his Trust and Hope in him for all his Happiness; hath a great Opinion of his Wisdom, a great Awe of his Power, a great Sense of his Goodness; the which Practice is in it self a direct and formal Glorification of God, in his own Person.

He also thereby doth farther promote the Glory of God, instructing, exciting, and encouraging others to the like Practice of deferring Respect and Service to God; for naturally Men have such a Capacity, such Aptitude, such Proclivity to Religion (or to the Acknowledgment and Worship of their Maker) that when they behold others seriously and earnestly pursuing it, they are easily drawn to conspire therein; especially those who are not utterly perverted and corrupted by ill Custom.

Ἀπερὶς ἀσχυ-  
ον τὴν μὲν μὴ  
κλῆμα τοῦ  
χόρι, ἡδίστον  
ἢ διαμα τοῖς  
ἐπιτυχεύουσιν.  
Baf. Ep. 42.  
Ὁταν δ' α-  
πισθῇ, &c.  
Chrys. ἀνδρ.  
6. (p. 524.)

And whereas good Conversation hath a native Beauty, affecting Beholders with Delight, whereas the Fruits of Vertue have a pleasing Sweetness, grateful to all who taste them; Men from that Sight and that Sense, will presently be moved to commend the Wisdom, and to bless the Goodness of him, who was pleased to institute so excellent a Religion, to enact so beneficial Laws, to prescribe so wholesome Duties to us: For, *when* (saith the most divine Father) *an Infidel shall see thee a Believer to be* *σταυρῶν*—*staunch, sober, orderly, he will be astonish'd, and will say, in truth great is the God of Christians! What Men hath he made? What Persons, out of what Persons hath he made them? How from Men hath he made them Angels? If one abuse them they do not rail; if one smite them, they do not resent; if one injure them, they pray for him that doth the Offence; they know not to remember ill Turns, they skill not to be vain, they have not learnt to lie, they cannot abide to forswear, or rather to swear at all, but sooner would chuse to have their Tongue cut out, than to let an Oath slip out of their Mouth.*

Gloria consensus multorum exigit—  
Consentire in hoc plures insignes & pra-  
stantes viri debent, ut claritas sit. Sen.  
Ep. 102.

Gloria est consensuens laus honorum in  
corrupta voce bene judicantium de ex-  
cellente virtute. Cic. 3. Tuscul. init.  
Gloria est frequens de aliquo fama  
cum laude. Cic. de Inv. 2. 39.

So may we really glorify God; and otherwise than by open Practice we cannot do it; for Glory doth require a publick Stage; it implying (as *Seneca* saith) *the consent of many worthy Persons declaring their Esteem*; it being, as *Cicero* defineth it, *the agreeing Praise of good Men; with an incorrupted Vote, judging well of an excellent Vertue.*

Wherefore toward our being enabled to glorify God, two Things must concur; that we be good Men, and that we be openly such.

Non est specio-  
sa laus in ore  
peccatoris.  
Ecclus. 15. 9.

That we be good Men, because otherwise our Commendation will have no worth, or weight; for *Praise is not comely in the mouth of Sinners*: It is no Ornament to be commended by ill Men, to whose Words little regard is due, little trust can be given.

That we be good openly, avowing God in Practice conducing to his Honour: Otherwise no Glory can accrue to him from our Goodness: We may serve God, and please him in private; but we cannot by that Service glorify him; at least at present and here in this World: It is true, the closest Piety will yield Glory to God at the last, *when our Lord shall come to be glorified in his Saints, and admired in them that believe*; but to design such a future Glorification of God is not enough; it is our Duty to glorify God now, that we may be rewarded for it, and that he may requite us with Glory hereafter.



God himself telleth us in the Psalm, *Whoso offereth Praise, he glorifieth me.* And Psal. 50. 23. how can Praise be offered, or to what Purpose will it be offered otherwise than apparently, either in Word or Deed, by oral or by real Expression, to the Ears, or to the Eyes of Men, so as to occasion in them the Production of worthy Conceptions and due Affections toward God? In such a manner the *holy Man* did offer it, who said, *I will declare thy Name unto my Brethren, in the midst of the Congregation I will praise thee; I will praise the Lord with my whole Heart, in the Assembly of the Upright, and in the Congregation;* He did it sometimes with his Mouth, which is a notable Part of our Conversation; but we may do it continually by our Life; for, *He (saith St. Austin) who praiseth God with his Tongue, cannot do that always; but he that praiseth God by his Manners can always do it.*

*Qui Deum laudat lingua, non semper potest; qui moribus Deum laudat, semper potest. Aug. in Ep. Joh. Tr. 1.*

This Motive is by the great Masters of our Christian Practice frequently urged; For

Saint Paul wisheth the *Philippians to be filled with the fruits of Righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the praise and glory of God;* He prayeth for the *Thessalonians, that God would fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ might be glorified in them:* He particularly doth incite the *Corinthians to Works of Charity, that by that ministration Men might be induced to glorify God, rendring him thankful Praise for their beneficial Obedience.*

St. Peter likewise doth exhort all Christians *to have their Conversation honest among the Gentiles, that they might by their good Works, which they should behold, glorify God in the day of visitation (that is perhaps, when they carefully do view, and reflect on them.)*

Our Lord himself thus chargeth his Disciples, *Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven;* they did observe his Command, and the Effect did follow, many being converted to God no less by the radiant Integrity of their Life, than by the persuasive Efficacy of their Doctrine: And, *In this (saith our Lord again) is my Father glorified, if ye bear much Fruit.* What Fruit was that? What but of good Works visible to the Eye, and perceptible to the Taste; otherwise how could Men thence find Cause to glorify God?

In fine, this is declared to be the peculiar Design of our Religion, or of the whole Christian Institution; to this end we are made *a chosen Generation, a royal Priesthood, a holy Nation, a peculiar People, that we should shew forth the Praises (or Vertues) of him, who hath called us out of Darkness to his marvellous Light;* not only by our Profession, but in our Practice, declaring his Goodness.

On the other hand, by sisting our Vertue and Conscience, in an open compliance with Sin, or neglect of our Duty, we greatly shall dishonour God; for thereby in effect we deny him, and desert him; we injure his Majesty, and disclaim our Allegiance to him; we intimate our mean Opinion of him, and small Affection to him; we betray our want of Reverence to his Excellency, of Dread to his Greatness, of Love to his Goodness; of Hope in his Promises, and gracious Overtures of Mercy; of Fear in regard to his severe Justice and fierce Menaces: So immediately we dishonour him, and we thereby also do countenance Disrespect and Disobedience to him: And our Behaviour tendeth to produce, or to confirm the like irreligious Dispositions of Mind and impious Practices in others; so that with horrible Disingenuity we cross the Design of our Creation, and violate our greatest Obligations toward our Maker.

Indeed what greater Affront, or more heinous Indignity can we offer to God, than openly before the World, by the most real Expressions of our Works, to deny and disown him; than to be notoriously ashamed, or afraid to avow him for our Lord and Master; than to express no Sense of our Duty to him, no Reverence of his Authority, no Gratitude for his Benefits to us; than visibly to prefer any other Consideration or worldly Advantage before a Regard to his Will and Pleasure.

In this open Sin doth outgo private Wickedness, and putteth down even the worst Hypocrisy (beside its own) that it not only offendeth God, but sorely woundeth his Honour, and exposeth his glorious Name to Contempt; by which Consideration such Miscarriages are frequently aggravated in Holy Scripture: So in the Prophets God complaineth of his People, for having by their scandalous Crimes profaned his holy Name among the Heathen: So St. Paul expostulateth with



Isa. 52. 2.  
Rom. 2. 23.  
2 Sam. 12. 14.

the Jew, Thou that boastest of the Law, through breaking the Law dishonourest thou God? So Nathan told David, that God would punish him, because by his bad Deed he had given great occasion to the Enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. But,

4. We should be careful of our good Behaviour in the Sight of Men, that we may thereby maintain the Dignity and Repute of our Christian Profession, which by our naughty or negligent Demeanour will be much disparaged and disgraced.

Most evident it is to Reason, that a visible Practice, conformable to the Rules of our Religion, cannot otherwise than exceedingly commend and grace it; for how can the goodness of a Rule more surely obtain its due Commendation, than from its being applied to observable Practice and Experience?

Assuredly Charity, Meekness, Humility, Patience, Sobriety, Discretion, and all Christian Vertues, as in themselves they are very amiable and venerable to all Men, as they yield great Benefit and much Pleasure to those whom their Consequences do touch; so they do ingratiate the Law which prescribeth them, they bring Esteem to the Principles, whence they are derived; He (as the Apostle faith) that in these things serveth Christ, is both acceptable to God, and approved of Men, as the Follower of a most excellent Rule.

Rom. 14. 18.

We may also consider, that a conspicuous Practice, according to our Religion, is a demonstrative Proof, that we do seriously and firmly embrace it, or that we are heartily and steadily persuaded of its Truth; which is no small Credit to any Profession, arguing that it hath a good Foundation in Reason, apt to bottom and sustain a solid Faith.

And as thereby we pregnantly do evidence, that we our selves do highly Value the noble Privileges, the excellent Promises, the precious Rewards exhibited in the Gospel; so we thereby do breed a like Esteem in others; upon whom the Authority of Men apparently Vertuous and Conscientious infallibly will have a forcible Influence.

Such a Practice will have a great Stroke toward evincing the Truth and Reality, the perfect Excellency, the notable Strength and Efficacy of our Religion; plainly shewing, that it is not a meer Name, an idle Pretence, a weak Fancy, a dry Speculation, a chimerical Dream; but a vigorous and masculine Principle, able to produce most worthy Fruits of substantial Goodness, profitable to Men; conducive to our own Welfare, and to the Benefit of others.

As gallant Actions, becoming a noble Rank, elevated above the vulgar Level, do illustrate and dignifie Nobility it self; so doth a worthy Conversation, becomming our high Station in the heavenly Kingdom, our near Alliances to God, those splendid Titles and glorious Privileges assigned to every faithful Christian in the Evangelical Charter, render our State admirable, and make it seem an excellent Advantage to be a Christian.

Tit. 2. 10.

Phil. 1. 27.

Eph. 4. 1.

Eph. 5. 3.

Rom. 16. 2.

Eph. 5. 8.

1 Thess. 2. 12.

Col. 1. 10.

Hence in the Apostolical Writings an Observance of the Evangelical Laws is so much and often enforced by this Consideration; for upon this Account we are exhorted to a careful Discharge of our Duty, that we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; We are urged to have our Conversation worthy of the Gospel; to walk worthy of the Vocation, wherewith we are called; to behave our selves as worthily becometh Saints (that is, Persons instituted in so Holy a Religion, and designed to so peculiar excellency in Vertue) to walk as children of the light, (that is, of Truth and Knowledge revealed from Heaven) to walk worthy of God, who hath called us unto his Kingdom and Glory; worthy of the Lord, unto all well-pleasing, being fruitful in every good work; the which Enforcements of Duty do imply a visible Practice, producing the visible Effects of Ornament and Credit to our Religion, recommending it to the Minds and Consciences of Men.

Contrariwise, the Defect of good Conversation before Men in Christians, is upon divers accounts disgraceful to our Religion. For,

It tempteth Men to judge, that we our selves do not heartily believe its Truth, or value its Worth; That we do not approve its Doctrine for reasonable, or take its Advantages for considerable, or deem the

Εἰ δὲ τις ἐλεγχθῇ ὡς ἔχων τι ἀπομὸν  
δὲ τοῦτο· οὐ μόνον ἑαυτὸν ἐβλάψεν, ἀλλὰ  
καὶ βλασφημίαν προσέτεκεν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ.  
Const. Ap. 2. 8.

Name and State of a Christian to be honourable; seeing we are not concerned to own them, or do not care to engage our Reputation in avowing and abetting them in that Way, which doth

best signifie our Mind and Meaning: For Men certainly will judge of our Sense, not so much



much by what we say, as from what we do; not by our verbal Profession or Pretence, but from our Practice, as the surest Indication of our Heart.

Wherefore when they hear us to confess our Faith, and see us Act like Infidels, they will be forced to esteem us either for subdolous Hypocrites, or for inconsistent Fools; who assume the Name of Christians, and pretend to great Advantages thence, yet in effect do not mind, or regard them; highly commending the Rules of our Religion, but not at all observing them; greatly admiring the Example of our Saviour, but not caring to imitate it; describing Heaven for a most happy Place, but not striving to get thither, in the sole Way, which our Lord prescribeth, of faithful and diligent Obedience to his Precepts.

Seeing, I say, this Repugnance between our Profession and our Practice, will induce Men to charge us with Hypocrisy and Folly; and if the Professors be taken for Counterfeits or Fools, the Profession it self will hardly 'scape from being held Imposture, or Folly.

Our Religion at least will thence be exposed to the Censures of being no better than a fond Device, and a barren Notion, unpracticable, ineffectual, and insignificant to any good Purpose.

The visible Misbehaviour, I say, of Christians, will assuredly derive Obloquy and Reproach on Christianity, if not as bad, yet as vain, impotent, impertinent, and useless; especially those who are disaffected to it, will hence take Advantage to insult upon it with contemptuous Scorn; to what, will they say, do your fine Rules serve? What effects do your glorious Hopes produce? Where are the Fruits of that holy Faith, and heavenly Doctrine, which you so extol and magnifie?

Whereas also bad Conversation commonly doth not only deprive Men of the Benefits which our Religion promisseth, but doth carry with it hurtful fruits; Men that see or feel them will be apt to impute them to Religion.

If a Christian be unjust, censorious, factious, any-wise offensive or troublesome, although Irreligion be the Cause of such things, yet Religion must bear the Blame, and they presently exclaim,

*Quantum religio potuit suadere malorum!*

Whence St. Paul (who was a powerful Instructor doth impress Matters of Duty by the proper Motives) doth often, and upon all Occasions urge this Consideration; He chargeth us *to give no offence in any thing, that the Ministry (or Evangelical Dispensation) be not blamed*, or exposed to the censure of any captious *Momus*; He biddeth us to forbear harsh Judgment, and all uncharitable Dealing, that *our good be not evil spoken of*. He presseth the Discharge of our Duty in each Calling and Relation, that by neglect thereof the Gospel be not defamed; *Let (saith he) as many Servants as are under the Yoke, count their own Masters worthy of all Honour, that the Name of God, and his Doctrine be not blasphemed*; and, *Let Women be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own Husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed*; and, *I will that younger Women marry, bear Children, guide the House* (so as) *to give no occasion to the Adversary (that is, to Persons disaffected to Christianity) to speak reproachfully (of it:)* which Discourse, by clear Parity of Reason, may be applied to any other State, or Relation.

Now seriously, what greater Mischief can we do, what heavier Guilt may we contract, than by working Dishonour to God's adorable Name, than by casting Reproach on God's heavenly Truth, than by drawing a Scandal on that holy Religion, which the Son of God came down from Heaven to establish, for the Glory of God, and Salvation of Mankind? Surely next after directly blaspheming God, and defying Religion with our own Mouths, the next Crime is to make others to do so, or in effect to do it by their profane Tongues.

There remain divers Arguments of very great Moment, which the Time will not suffer me to urge; and therefore I must reserve them to another Occasion.



# SERMON XXXIII.

## Provide Things Honest in the Sight of all MEN.

ROM. XII. 17.

*Provide things honest in the sight of all Men.*

**I** HAVE formerly discoursed upon this Apostolical Precept ; and having declared the Meaning of it (briefly importing, That we should have a special Care of our external Behaviour, coming under the View and Observation of Men, that it be perfectly innocent and inculpable,) I did propose divers Motives inducing to the Observance of it ; but divers others of great Importance the time would not allow me to urge ; I shall therefore now proceed to offer them to your Consideration.

I did then shew that a regard to the Reason and Nature of Things, to the Satisfaction of our Conscience, to the Honour of God, and to the Credit of our Religion, did require from us a good Conversation before Men : I now farther add, That,

I. The real Interest of Piety and Vertue do exact such a Conversation as the most effectual way of upholding, advancing, and propagating them among Men.

Example is a very powerful thing either way ; both for Attraction to Good, and Seduction to Evil ; such is the Nature of Men, that they are more apt to be guided by the Practice of others, than by their own Reason ; and more easily can write after a Copy, than by a Rule ; that they are prone to imitate whatever they see done, be it good or bad, convenient or inconvenient, profitable or hurtful, emulating the one, and aping the other ; that they love to be in the fashion, and will go any whither in Company, presuming of Support, Defence and Comfort therein ; that they will satisfy their Minds, and justify their Doings by any Authority, deeming that laudable or allowable, or at least tolerable and excusable, for which they can alledge Precedents ; judging that if they are not singular, they are innocent, or however not very culpable ; that they will hardly undertake any thing without Countenance, whereby their Modesty is in some measure secured, and Partners engaged to bear a share with them in the Censure, to which their Deportment is liable. Hence a visible good Conversation will have an Efficacy toward the promotion and propagation of Goodness ; the Authority of that being adjoined to the native Worth and Beauty, to the rational Plausibility, to the sensible Benefit of Vertue, will cogently draw Men to it ; it will be a clear Pattern, whereby they shall be informed what they are obliged, and what they are able to perform ; it will be a notable Spur smartly exciting them to mind and pursue their Duty ; it will be a vigorous Incentive, inflaming their Courage, and provoking an Emulation to do well.

The visible Succour and Countenance of many, espousing the Cause of Goodness by their Practice, will assuredly bring it into Request and Vogue, and thence into current Use and Fashion ; so just a Cause cannot fail to prosper, having any reasonable Forces to maintain it ; it will have great Strength, great Boldness and Assurance, when a considerable Party doth appear engaged on its Side.

Yea



Yea sometimes even the Example of a few will do it great Service; the rarity giving a special Lustre to their Vertue, and rendring it more notable; according to that intimation of the *Apostle*; when he thus doth exhort the *Philippians* to a cheerful and forward Practice of Goodness; *Do all things* (saith he) *without Murmuring and Disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the Sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation, among whom ye shine as Lights in the World.* Phil. 2. 14, 15.

A good Conversation doth notifie good Men to one another, and draweth them together, and combineth them in a Party, for the Protection of Goodness, heartning and aiding one another therein.

Such Advantages Goodness doth always need; for it ever hath in the World many Adversaries, striving by violent force to beat it down, or by treacherous Fraud to supplant it; who use their Authority and Interest to suppress it; who by their evil Example do seduce from it; who labour by detraction to blast it, by Scorn and Reproach to discourage it, by divers Temptations and Baits to entice from it; who combining their Forces with the wicked Spirits, and with the corrupt Inclinations of Men, do raise a mighty Party for Wickedness.

Wherefore to balance such Oppositions, Goodness doth need Friends to maintain it; not only Friends in Heart, or secret Well-wishers; but open Friends, who frankly will avow it, and both in Word and Deed will stoutly abet it.

A demure, bashful, timorous Friendship will rather prejudice than help it; for nothing will more animate its Foes to assail and persecute it, than observing its Friends to flink and sneak; When good Men hide their Faces, as if they were ashamed of their Goodness, then bad Men will grow more impudent, and insolent in their Outrages against it.

Wherefore, if we would have Goodness hold up its head, we must openly take its Part; if we would not be guilty of its ruin, we must stand up to uphold it; for whoever openly complieth with Sin, or neglecteth his Duty, may well be charged with its ruin; since if thou so desertest Goodness, another after thy Pattern may do the like, and a third may follow him; so the neglect of it may soon be propagated, until at length it may be quite abandoned, and left destitute of Support: If it doth not thus happen, it will as to thee be accidental, and no thanks to thee for its better Fortune.

The Declension of Piety is not perhaps more to be ascribed to any other Cause, than to this, than that Men who approve Goodness in their Hearts, are so backward to shew it in their Practice; that good Men do so affect Retirement, and wrapping up their Vertue in Obscurity; that most Men think it enough if in the Cause of Religion against Profaneness and Dissoluteness they appear *Neuters*, and do not impugn it: For if in a time of Infection all sound Men do shut up themselves, and all sick Men walk abroad, how necessarily must the Plague reign in the Place?

II. Charity toward our Neighbour demandeth from us a great Care of our Conversation before Men.

The Law of Charity, which is the great Law of Christianity, doth oblige us earnestly to further our Neighbour's Good of all kinds, especially that, which is incomparably his best Good, the Welfare of his Soul; which how can we better do, than by attracting him to the Performance of his Duty to God, and by withdrawing him from the Commission of Sin? And how can we do that without an apparently good Conversation, or without plainly declaring, as occasion sheweth, for Vertue, both in Word and Deed? How can a shy Reservedness conduce to that end? What will invisible Thoughts or Affections of Heart confer thereto?

'Tis a precept of Charity, that we should *pursue things, wherewith one may edifie another*; and how can we perform that Duty, without imparting our Mind, and as it were transfusing it into others; so as by converting them from Error and Sin, by instilling good Principles, by exciting good Resolutions, to lay in them a Foundation of Goodness, or by cherishing and improving the same to rear a Structure of Vertue in them? How can we mutually edifie, without mutually advising Vertue, exhorting to it, recommending and impressing it by our exemplary Behaviour? Rom. 14. 19.  
1 Cor. 14. 26.

The



Παρεκαλεῖται  
ἀλλήλους.  
1 Theff. 5. 11.  
Heb. 10. 24.  
ἵνα ὁμιλήσω-  
μεν.

The Apostles do injoin, That we should *exhort one another, and edify one another*; that we should *consider one another, to provoke* (or to whet and instigate one another) *to love and to good works*; the which can no wise be performed, without expressly declaring for Goodness and remarkable acting in its behalf; To commend and press it by Word is a part of our Duty; but not all of it, nor sufficient to this purpose; especially seeing we cannot urge that with good Confidence, nor shall be held serious in pleading for it, which we do not our selves embrace in Practice; for how can we expect, that our Reason should convince others, when it doth not appear really to have persuaded our selves; when our Doings evidently do argue the Weakness of our Discourse?

1 Pet. 3. 1.

Words hardly will ever move without Practice, although Practice sometimes will persuade without Words; according to that of St. Peter; *Ye Wives be in subjection to your own Husbands, that if any obey not the Word, they may without the Word be won by the Conversation of the Wives; while they behold your chaste Conversation coupled with fear* (or due Reverence to them.)

1 Cor. 10. 32.

8. 9.

2 Cor. 6. 3.

Rom. 14. 13.

Again, We are frequently commanded to *shun the giving any Offence*; or the *putting a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in the way of our Brother*; that is, to do any thing which any-wise may confer his incurring any Sin; the which Precepts are violated not only by positive and active influence, by proposing erroneous Doctrine, evil Advice, fraudulent enticements to Sin, or discouragements from Duty; but also by with-holding the Means serving to prevent his Transgression; such as a tacit Indulgence, or Connivance, when good Admonition may reclaim him: the Omission of good Example, when it is seasonable, and probably may prove efficacious; for these Neglects have a moral causality, inducing or encouraging the Commission of Sin; our Silence, our forbearing to act, our declining fair Opportunities to guide him into the right way will be taken for Signs of Approbation and Consent; and consequently as Arguments to justify or excuse bad Practice, in Proportion to the Authority and Esteem we have; which ever will be some in this Case, when they favour the Infirmary of Men.

1 Theff. 5. 14.

Eph. 5. 11.

Levit. 19. 17.

Charity doth farther oblige us, upon just Cause, and in due Season, to check and reprove our Neighbour misdeeming himself; for, *Warn the disorderly*, saith the Apostle; and, *Have no fellowship* (saith he) *with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them*; and, *Thou shalt not* (saith the Law) *hate thy Brother in thy Heart, thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy Neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him*; where forbearance of Reproof is implied, to shew not only a defect of Charity, but hatred of our Brother; and a good Reason is intimated for it, because in so doing, we suffer Sin to lie upon him; not hindring his Progress in it, not endeavouring his Conversion from it; but Reproof is an overt Act, involving somewhat of openness and plain freedom, such as the *Wise man* doth prefer before close goodwill; for, *Open rebuke* (saith he) *is better than secret Love*.

Prov. 22. 5.

We are all thus far the *keepers of our Brethren*, and it is a Charge incumbent on us, by all good means to preserve them from the worst of Mischiefs.

In fine, there is plainly nothing more inconsistent with true Charity, than such a Compliance with Sin, or Neglect of Duty in the sight of our Neighbour, which is scandalous, or may prove contagious to him; for how can we love him, whose chief Good, whose eternal Welfare we do not tender? Whom we do not fear to seduce into the way of extream Misery, or do not at least care to lead into the Way of Happiness; whom without any check we can suffer to forfeit the best Goods, and to incur the saddest Calamities?

Rom. 14. 15.

Wherefore if the Love of our selves, and a sober Regard to our own Welfare be not sufficient to induce us, yet a charitable Disposition, and a Concernedness for our Neighbour (for our Brethren, our Relations, our Friends) should move us to a good, innocent, vertuous, fruitful and exemplary Conversation; If we do not care to save our selves, yet let it pity us to damn and destroy others by our Negligence.

III. But if Charity will not move us, yet Justice, exacting from us a care of our good Conversation before Men, should constrain us thereto.

Exemplary and edifying Conversation is a Debt which we owe to the World; a good Office imposed on us by the Laws of common Humanity.

When



When without our own hurt or inconvenience we can do considerable good to our Neighbour, he hath a Title thereto (granted by the common Author of our Nature, the absolute Lord of all we are or have) and he may justly demand it from us; as we in like Case might claim it from him, and certainly would in Matters agreeable to our Humour expect it; Wherefore seeing good Conversation not only doth not harm or incommode us, but is most beneficial to our selves, and it exceedingly may benefit our Neighbour, it is most just that we should afford it to him; it is no more than fair Dealing to do it, to neglect it is a real Injury to him.

To set ill Example before our Neighbour, or (which is in Part, and in Effect the same) to withhold good Example from him (for not to give a good Example is a bad Thing, and so a bad Example; this) I say is plainly a great Iniquity, and a Wrong to him. For,

Is it not an Injury to offer a Cup of Poison to any Man, to invite him to drink it, to be his taster of it, so drawing him to take it off without Suspicion, or fear of deadly Mischief? Is it not an Injury to forbear warning him thereof, or not to deter him from it, when it standeth before him, and he is ready to put it to his Mouth? Would not such a Man in all conscionable Esteem pass for a Murderer of his Neighbour?

Is it not a great Wrong to carry any Man out of his Way (out of a right, easie, fair, and safe Road) into Mazes, Thickets, and Sloughs, or into intricate, foul, dangerous Bye-ways? Is it not wrongful, when he doth wander or err, not to reduce him thence, not to set him in the right way?

Is it not very foul dealing to bring a Man to a steep Precipice, and thence to leap down before him? Is it not so, not to stop him, when he is on the brink, and blindly moving forward to cast himself down head-long?

If these be injurious Dealings, then palpably it is far more such to yield any Inticements or Encouragements, yea not to put Obstructions, if we are able, to our Neighbours incurring Sin, which to his Soul is all those things; the most baneful Venom, the most woful Exorbitancy, the most pernicious Gulf that can be.

We by *sinning* do not only (as the *Wiseman* saith) *wrong our own Souls*, but we *Prov. 8. 36.* do also wrong the Souls of others; drawing them, or driving them by the efficacious impulse of our Example into Mischief and Misery; for *When* (saith *St. Paul*) *1 Cor. 8. 12.* *ye sin so against the Brethren, and wound their weak Conscience, ye sin against Christ*; he there speaketh of bad Example: the which he not only affirmeth to be sinful in regard of *Christ*, but calleth it *sinning against our Brethren*; and supposeth that we thereby do wound, or *smite* their Conscience; which to do is surely no less wrong to them, than if we should assault, beat, and wound their Bodies; the wounds of Conscience being of all most grievous, and producing most insupportable Affliction; according to that of the *Wiseman*, *The spirit of a Man will bear his Infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear?* *Prov. 18. 14.*

Indeed by thus hurting our Neighbour, we do him a Wrong, not only very great in it self, but such as may probably be irreparable, for which hardly we can ever be able to make him any Restitution or Compensation; for a better Example scarce will reach all, whom a bad Example hath touched; the best Example hardly will avail to undo that, which a bad Example hath done; If thereby we have engaged our Neighbour in Sin, we by no means can restore his lost Innocence; or prevent his saying, *Wo be to me, for I have sinned*; It will be very difficult to recover him into that State (that sound Condition of Soul) from which we did move him; it will however cost him, if not a final Ruin, yet a sore Repentance; the Pangs whereof no Compensation, which we can yield, will requite: The Wounds which we thereby do inflict may rankle, and prove incurable; they assuredly will find no easie Cure; they must however either in Consequence, or in the Correction be very painful; and they will leave an ugly Scar behind them.

The Injustice of this Practice may also farther appear, upon divers special Accounts.

All Men esteem Pity a Debt, which one Man oweth to another, as liable to Grief and Misery; (the Obligation whereto is written in the Bowels of each Man) which Pity will incline to succour the Object of it in danger or distress; where-



fore every Man by the natural Law is bound to endeavour the Prevention or the  
 Jude 22, 23. Rescue of another falling into Mischief; according to that of St. Jude, *Of some have compassion, making a difference, and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire*; whence to draw Men into Sin by ill Practice, or not to restrain them from it by good, is unjust, as a pitiless hard-hearted, cruel thing.

1 Sam. 3. 13. (*His Sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.*)

Again, All Men hold Flattery to be a Practice very abusive, or more than simply wrongful: as with Injury joining Contempt and Cozenage: taking Advantage of a Man's Infirmary to work Prejudice to him; it is indeed a mischievous, a pernicious, and withal a perfidious, an insidious, and ensnaring Practice; for, *A flattering Mouth (saith the Wise-man) worketh ruin, and A Man that flattereth his Neighbour, spreadeth a Net for his feet.* But Flattery is not only verbal; the worst Flattery is not that whereby Men sooth and gloze with their Lips, encouraging others by fictitious Commendations to persist in bad Courses; there is a tacit Flattery, when by our connivance at Sin we seem to approve it; there is a real Flattery when by our compliance with Sin, we recommend it to our *Comrades*; These do not look so grossly, yet do insinuate into our Mind, and commonly do inveigle to Sin more effectually; Men being more apt to trust our Deeds than our Words, being more pleased in our vouching their Actions by a participation in them, and running a common Hazard with them, than in our straining to commend, or to excuse them: whence it is, that gross Flattery hath its effect chiefly upon simpler Folks, but this subtle Flattery doth often gull and abuse Persons of greatest Capacity.

Prov. 31. 30. *Favour is deceitful.*

Prov. 26. 28. 29. 5.

Again, A good Conversation before Men is a Part of that due Respect, which we owe to them; There is a Regard, and a kind of Reverence to be had toward every Man; which should engage us to behave our selves decently in his Presence, signifying a Consideration and Esteem of his Person, of his Opinion, of his Respectment, of his Affection toward us: To do any foul or unhandsome thing is a contempt of him, a rudeness toward him, an affront put on him; whereby in effect we do slight, disparage and reproach him; implying, that we do little value his Judgment, that we care not for his Good-will; that we presume he hath not the Sense to discern, or hath not the Spirit to dislike, or must have the Patience to comport with our unseemly and unfavoury Carriage; And if to do other unhandsome Things before Men is such an Indignity offered to them, then it is especially such to commit Sin before them, which is the most ugly, the most sordid, the most loathsome Behaviour that can be; there is no Deformity, no Turpitude in Nature comparable to Sin; nothing so offensive, so distastful, so abominable to  
 Prov. 14. 21. a rational Sense; so that the *Wise-man's* Saying is very true, taken any-way, *He that despiseth his Neighbour, sinneth*; 'tis both a Sin to condemn him; and sinning is  
 11. 12. an Argument of Contempt toward him; Nor can we better observe St. Peter's  
 1 Pet. 2. 17. Injunction, that we *honour all Men*, than by forbearing to Sin in their Presence, out of Respect to them. But farther,

IV. Let us consider, that a good Conversation before Men is a publick Benefit, a great Advantage to the World, and common State of Men.

It is not only a good Office of Charity to this or that Man; but it layeth a general Obligation on our Country, on our Age, on Posterity it self; upon which a fruitful Life, an exemplary Vertue may have notable influence.

As notorious Sin is a Plague to the World, throwing Infection and Death about it; provoking the Wrath of Heaven, and thence deriving Vengeance on it; So notable Vertue is a general Blessing, producing most wholesome and comfortable Effects to Mankind.

For how can one more oblige the Publick, than by conferring Help to uphold the Reputation, and to propagate the Entertainment of those Things which are the main Props of the World, for the Sake of which it standeth, and by the Means of which it is sustained; than by preserving the Vertue and Power of Conscience, which is the Band of all Society, the Guardian of Faith and Honesty, the best Enforcer of Justice, Order, and Peace in the State; (that which *exalteth a Nation, and establisheth a Kingdom*) than by producing and promoting those Things, which certainly will procure the Favour and Blessing of God on any People?

Prov. 14. 34. 20. 28.

How



How can a Man better deserve of the World, than by concurring to stop the Contagion of Sin, and the overspreading Deluge of Iniquity, together with all the lamentable Mischiefs consequent on them; than by averting the fierce Wrath, and severe Judgments of God, which a general Prevalence of Wickedness necessarily will bring down?

Most Men pretend to be concerned even for the Honour of their Country; and how can we better promote that, than by checking the Progress of Sin, which will not only be the Bane, but is (as Solomon telleth us) *the reproach of any People?* Prov. 14. 34.

It may possibly be, it hath really been, that the conspicuous Vertue of a few Men (yea sometimes of one single Person) hath leavened a Country, hath seasoned an Age, hath imbued Posterity with an Admiration of Goodness, and with an Affection to it. (One Man, saith St. Chrysostome, *enflamed with Zeal, may suffice to reform an entire People.*) So among the Pagans, one Person did set up the Study of Morality, and worthily was stiled the *Parent* of (that most useful) *Philosophy*, whereby he did exceedingly benefit Mankind, and did confer much toward preparing Men for the Reception of our heavenly Philosophy. *Socrates philosophia parens.* Cic.

Such our Lord designed his Apostles to be; for, *Ye (saith he) are the lights of the world, ye are the salt of the earth;* and such in effect they did prove, *God by them* (as St. Paul saith) *manifesting the favour of his knowledge in every place;* they not only by their heavenly Doctrine, but chiefly by the Lustre and Influence of their holy Example, converting the World from impious Errours and naughty Practices, unto true Religion, and vertuous Conversation: They did lead Men to Goodness not only by the Ears, but by the Eyes, seeing their excellent Life, and walking as they had them for an example. Phil. 3. 17. 1 Cor. 11. 1. 1 Cor. 4. 16. 2 Thess. 3. 7, 9.

It consequently may be, yea hath been, that the singular Integrity of one, or of a few Persons, displaying it self, hath appeased Divine Wrath, and hath staved off imminent Ruin from a People. So one Noah publicly maintaining, and preaching righteousness, did preserve the whole Race of Men from Extirpation: So ten Persons avowing Righteousness would have kept Sodom from that rueful Destruction: So one good Man (notably owning God, and interposing for the Concerns of Piety) might have prevented that calamitous Vengeance, which fell upon Israel; as *Jeremy* told before, and *Ezekiel* affirmed after it; *Run ye so and fro (saith God in Jeremy) through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a Man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh truth, and I will pardon it; and, I sought for a man (saith God in Ezekiel) among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none: therefore have I poured mine indignation upon them.* There was then a remnant of those who closely did serve God; and perhaps seven thousand unknown Persons, who had not in their Hearts deserted Religion; but this did not avert God's Wrath, or preserve the Nation from Captivity; as a few openly professing, and resolutely practising Goodness, might have done. Jer. 5. 1. Ezek. 22. 30. Isa. 1. 9. 1 Kings 19. 14, 18.

Now who would not be glad of being so publick a Friend, so general a Benefactor, in performing that, which doth otherwise so much become him, and so greatly behove him; yielding him the best Ornaments, and highest Advantages even upon his private Account? Who would not be ambitious both to oblige his Country, and to save his own Soul together, by a worthy Conversation?

Affuredly nothing can be devised more conducive to the effecting a reformation and amendment of the World (and consequently to the Prosperity and Felicity of Mankind here) than a Conspiracy of good Men in a frank and brisk avowing of Goodness in the Face of the World.

V. A Care of our Conversation in the sight of Men, is needful for the Preservation of our good Name, and fair Repute among them.

A good Name in holy Scripture, is represented as a special Gift, and Blessing of God; bestowed in recompence of Piety and Vertue; and preferred before other most considerable Gifts and Blessings, concerning our external State; for, *By humility (saith the Wise-man) and the fear of the Lord, are riches and honour; both are the Rewards of Piety; but comparing them, A good name (saith he) is rather to be chosen than great riches;* It cannot therefore be a contemptible Thing, nor



ought it to be neglected by us; for none of God's Gifts, no Reward which he proposeth, ought to be slighted.

Reason and Experience also do concur in shewing that a good Repute is a valuable Thing, not only as a fair Ornament of our Persons, and a commodious Instrument of Action toward our private Welfare; as a guard of our Safety and Quiet, as serving to procure divers Conveniences of Life; but as very advantageous, very useful upon moral and spiritual Accounts, qualifying us with greater Ease and Efficacy to serve God, and to do good; for indeed 'tis manifest, that without it we shall be incapable of doing God or Man any considerable Service.

Wherefore in Duty and Wisdom we should be careful of preserving this Jewel; the which we cannot otherwise do, than by observing this Apostolical Rule, of providing things honest in the sight of all men; for a good Conversation is the only guard and convoy of a good Name: How can Men conceive a good Opinion of us, otherwise than from a view of worthy Qualities and good Deeds? They may charitably hope, but they cannot confidently judge well of us, otherwise than upon good Evidence: *To shall know them by their fruits* (that is, by apparent Works, falling under human Cognizance) is the Rule, whereby our Saviour teacheth us to distinguish of Men, and to build a right Opinion concerning them: Honour is the Shadow, the inseparable Attendant of conspicuous Virtue.

A good Conversation will indeed command Esteem, and irresistibly extort Respect from all Men.

Wise and good Men heartily will approve it, and gladly will yield it due Commendation; they cannot but honour it whenever they see it, as best suiting with their own Judgment, and with their Affection.

Yea, it will procure Respect even from the worst Men; for it is a mistake to think, that bad Men really do or can despise true Goodness; in Truth, however they may pretend or make a Shew to slight and scorn it, however in Words they may flout and revile it, yet in their Hearts they cannot but admire and reverence it; although their Will may be so perverted as to set them against, yet their Reason cannot be so destroyed (or natural Light so quenched in them) as to disapprove it; they do but vilely dissemble, and bely their Conscience, when they

make as if they did condemn, or condemn it: *As* (saith St. Chrysostome) *they who openly do flatter ill livers, do in their mind reprove them; so they who envy the workers of good, in their Conscience will admire and approve them*: At least they will do thus in their sober Mind; when with any serious Application they

do reflect on things; when the eye of their Soul is any-wise cleared from the Mists of Lust and Passion: It is not to be heeded what they say in a Fluster or ranting Mood; when they are near out of their Wits, and have their Judgment stifled by sensual Imaginations; but what they think, when their Mind is somewhat composed, and natural Light doth shine freely in it.

Indeed such Wretches really do most despise those, who consort and comply with them in sinful Follies: As they cannot in their Hearts honour themselves, so they cannot esteem those whom they find like unto them; especially they despise those whom they observe to be so base and silly, as against their own Judgment and Conscience, to fear their Displeasure, or to regard their Censure; looking upon them as Vassals to their Humour, and Renegadoes from their own Conscience.

Moreover, a good Conversation certainly will engage Almighty God to protect our Reputation, and to confer Honour upon us. For he, as Governour of the World, the Patron of Goodness, the Dispenser of proper Rewards to all, is in a manner bound to Encourage those openly, who visibly do own him and take his Part, who promote his Glory and Interest, who pay him due Service and Obedience; who in regard to his Authority, do faithfully pursue that which is right and good; He surely will see fit to repay such in the same Kind, by openly Acknowledging, Countenancing, and Honouring them; Accordingly he hath tied himself to do so by his exprefs Word and Promise; for, *Them*, saith he, *that honour me, I will honour; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed*; he said it in reference to old Eli, who had neglected the Duty of restraining his sons from sin; which is a Case very much of kin to all neglect of exemplary Piety. And, *Whoever*, saith our Lord, *shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the*

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*the Angels of God; but he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the Angels of God; the which (one most comfortable, the other most terrible) Sentences are to be understood, He that confesseth our Lord not meerly by verbal Profession, (for divers such who say, Lord, Lord, he will not so much as know at the final Judgment) but in real Practice; He that denieth him, not only by renouncing him with the Tongue, but by disobeying him in scandalous Conversation, by working Iniquity, by the Apostasie of bad Manners.* Matt. 7. 23.

VI. Lastly, The publick Discharge of a good Conscience will yield manifold Advantages, and great Benefits to our selves; not only as good (and thence needful to our Salvation, and our Comfort) but as publick; some of which I shall touch.

Such a Practice will much secure and strengthen us in Goodness; for he that hath the Heart, with Resolution and Constancy to do well, notwithstanding any worldly Discouragement, although he thereby doth cross the Humour of the World, and incurreth the Displeasure, Bavy, Hatred, Censure, and Obloquy of Men, he thus having exalted his Vertue above the Favour and Fear of the World, hath set it in a safe Place, hath render'd it impregnable.

The Consideration of having obtained so happy, and so worthy a Victory over the most dangerous Temptations, (the Victory of Faith over the World) will be very comfortable; And the Sufferings which (from the Disfavour, Enmity, and Opposition of Men) do attend such a Practice, being a kind of Martyrdom, will yield all the Joys and Comforts (together with the Hopes and Rewards) of an heroical Patience. 1 John 4.

It will afford great Satisfaction of Mind, to reflect on the Consequences of such a Practice; and to consider, that our Resolution hath engaged or confirmed others in Goodness, hath preserved them from Sin, hath withdrawn them from bad Courses, and saved them from Perdition; that we have been instrumental to the Salvation and Happiness of any Soul; that beside our own Sins (which are a Burthen too heavy for any Man well to bear) we have not the Sins of others to account for, and shall not be loaded with the Guilt of those, whom our neglect of Duty, our compliance with Sin, our stupid coldness and indifference in regard to spiritual Affairs, our dissimulation or connivance at the scandalous Violation of God's Honour, and Transgression of his Laws, might have encouraged in Sin; that we are not liable to that Reproof in the Prophet, *Ye have strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way.* Ezek. 13. 22.

We shall highly oblige those, whom by our good Endeavour or Example we shall convert to Righteousness, or reclaim from Iniquity, or shall any-wise stop in their Carrier to Ruin; who when they shall recover from their Errour, and soberly reflect on their Case, (when they shall *ἀναψεν*, become again sober, getting out as it were of their drunken fit) will heartily thank us, will bless us, will pray for us, as having laid on them a very great Obligation, and done them the greatest Kindness that could be; so that they will be ready to say to us, as *David* did to *Abigail*, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who sent thee this day to meet me; and blessed be thy advice; and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from shedding of blood.* 2 Tim. 2. 26; 1 Sam. 25. 32; Prov. 28. 23; 27. 6. 19. 25.

This will be the Consequence of plain Dealing in such Cases, and that will be fulfilled which the *Wise-man* saith, *He that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favour, than he that flattereth with the tongue.*

We thereby shall escape the sore Complaints, and fell Curses of those, whom our naughty or careless Demeanour hath involved in sinful Practice; for when their Conscience is awakened into a Sense of their Guilt, when they feel the Stings of Remorse, when they perceive the extreme Damage and Woe which they have incurred, then will they discharge their Resentments of Heart against those, who have any-wise been accessory to their fall into such a Condition; then in their Bitterness of Soul, in the Agony of their Sorrow and Perplexity, they will be apt to exclaim, *Curst be the Day that I knew such an one, or that I did converse with him, who did betray me into this plight, who did inveigle me into Temptation, who did not pluck me back from that sinful Practice, by which I now so deeply suffer; Curst be his base Cowardice, his fond Modesty, his affected Wisdom, his treacherous Negligence, his unconscionable Indifference, his impious want of Zeal for God's Honour, and Charity for my Soul, which did keep him from checking*



Acts 26. 26.  
Ezek. 7. 17.  
33. 7.

checking me in my bad Courses, and reclaiming me to my Duty by wholesome Reproof, by seasonable Advice, by exemplary Practice before me: It will surely be a great Comfort to us, that we have not given Occasion for such Complaints; but in proportion may say with St. Paul, *I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*

It is also no small Advantage to us, that by a good Conversation we shall procure the particular Friendship and Affection of good Men; for it is that, which discovereth good Men to one another, which kindleth their Affection toward each other, which draweth them together, and breedeth a Familiarity between them, and knitteth their Hearts together in a holy Love; from whence they come to enjoy the faithful Advice, the kind Assistance, the seasonable Consolations, and the hearty Prayers of each other; the which great Benefits are lost by concealment of our selves, and reservedness in doing Good: For how can any Man know him to deserve Love, whose Goodness is not discernible?

Such Considerations may induce all Persons, of every Rank and Condition, to observe this Apostolical Precept, so far as their Capacities do reach. I shall only adjoin, that it especially doth concern Persons of Quality, in Proportion to their Eminency in Dignity, Power, Authority, Reputation, or any peculiar Advantage, whereby the beneficial Efficacy of good Conversation is increased.

Mat. 5. 15.

Such Persons are like a city seated on a mountain, which cannot be hid; the height of their Station, and lustre of their Quality, do expose them to the Observation of all; and their Authority doth recommend their Practice to the Imitation of Observers.

Their Example cannot fail of having a mighty Influence; its Light doth guide Men, its Weight doth sway them; it doth seem to warrant and authorize Practice; Inferiours would be afraid or ashamed to dispart from it.

They have not the Temptations, which other Men have, to comply with Sin out of Fear, out of Complaisance, out of Design; they being to lead and give Law, not to follow or receive it; they being the first movers in Conversation; the Fashion being regulated by them, or indeed being meerly a Conformity to their Deportment.

Const. Apost.  
2. 17.

They should by their Innocence qualifie themselves to reprove others with Authority and Courage.

They in Gratitude to God, who hath bestowed on them such Advantages, are obliged to employ them for his Service.

Rom. 13. 3—  
6.  
1 Pet. 2. 14.

They particularly were designed and endowed with those Advantages, that by them they might countenance, might encourage, might reward, might by all means promote Goodness in the World.

They accordingly are responsible for the Influence their Conversation hath; so that in the final Accompt most Actions of Men will lie at their Door, so that they shall respectively be either highly rewarded for the Vertues and good Works, or severely punished for the Vices and Sins of Mankind: The which most weighty Consideration I leave by God's Grace to be seriously applied by them, who are concerned therein.

## SERMON XXXIV.

### Provide Things Honest in the Sight of all MEN.

2 COR. VIII. 21.

*Providing for honest things not only in the sight of the Lord, but in the sight of Men.*

**I**F we observe the World, we may easily therein discern many Persons, who being inwardly well-disposed (standing right both in Judgment and Affection to Goodness) are yet loth to appear very good, and hardly will own Christian Vertue, in the constant Discharge of publick Duties, or in strict Abstinence from sinful



sinful Practices; but commonly (against the Dictate of their Reason, and Sense of their Heart) neglect the one, and comply with the other: An odd Sort of Hypocrites, or Dissemblers, who studiously conceal their better Part, and counterfeit themselves worse than they are; who adore God in their Hearts, and address Devotions to him in their Closets; but scarce will avow him in their visible Profession and Practice; who have a Conscience, but are shy of disclosing it, or letting it take air, and walk in open light; confining it as a Criminal to close Restraint, or obscure Retirement; who gladly would be religious and staunch, if there might be no notice taken of it, but take care of being remarkable (or as it were scandalous) for it; who think fit to compromise, and compound the Business between God and the World, maintaining a Neutrality, and Correspondence with both, so as privately to court the one, and publickly to close with the other.

Such Practice is flatly repugnant to that Rule, which elsewhere in Precept, and here by his own Example the holy *Apostle* doth recommend to us; directing us not only *before God* (that is, in our Heart, and in our secret Retirements, which God alone doth behold) but also *before men*, that is, in our external and visible Conversation, carefully to perform Things good and laudable, eschewing whatever is bad or culpable. Rom. 12. 17.  
Εὐσέπινον Κυν-  
εῖα.

Our Obligation to which Rule hath already been confirmed by divers other Precepts in *holy Scripture*, concurring in the Injunction of it; and its Observance urged by various positive Considerations of great Weight and Force (declaring how necessary it is for promoting God's Honour and Glory, how requisite it is for maintaining the Dignity of our Profession, and advancing the Interests of Goodness, how Charity and Justice toward our Neighbour do exact it from us, how conducive it is to the publick Benefit of Mankind, and how advantageous in many Respects to our own particular Welfare) and not insisting farther upon those Considerations, I shall now only inforce it, by scanning the common Principles, Grounds, Motives, Pretences, or Excuses of the contrary Practice, which I before touched, of openly deserting Vertue, or declining the Performance of Duty before Men; and by shewing how very foolish and vain, how very naughty and base, how very mischievous, dangerous, and pernicious they are.

They chiefly are those, which I shall immediately touch and reflect upon.

I. Men commonly in their visible Conversation do neglect their Duty, or comply with Sin out of Modesty; because they are ashamed of doing that, which may expose them to some Disgrace or Censure; because vertuous Practice may raise Distast in the Company, and provoke the Scorn of those with whom they converse; because such a Point of Duty is out of Request, and slighted in the World; they are *afraid of mens faces*; their tender Fore-head cannot sustain Derision, or endure to be flouted for being out of the Mode, and wearing an uncouth Garb of Conscience. Jer. 1. 8.

But this plainly is a perverse, and unmanly Modesty; a fond, a vile, a shameful Shame: Fy on it! Should any Man be ashamed of that, which is his chief Beauty, his best Ornament, his sole Dignity and Glory? Should a Man be ashamed of being evidently wise in his Conduct, of following his Reason, of consulting his true Interest, of pursuing his own certain Welfare and Felicity? Is it fit that any Man should be ashamed of paying due Acknowledgment, of yielding due Reverence, of rendring due Gratitude, of performing due Service to his Creator, Sovereign Lord, and great Benefactor; to whom he oweth all, upon whose Will he entirely dependeth, at whose absolute Disposal he is? Surely these are no shameful Things, but such rather, wherein we ought to have the greatest Confidence, which we ought to perform with the greatest Assurance.

If we are bashful, let us be so in regard to Things which are truly shameful; let us be ashamed of Sin, that is, of our most real Deformity, our Turpitude, our Disgrace, our Wretchedness; the which indeed is the only dishonourable and despicable Thing; the which did first produce Shame, and did introduce it into the World (for while Innocence did abide, there was no Shame) and the which will ever carry Shame along as its inseparable Adherent: It would indeed become us to blush at our horrible Unworthiness, and detestable Ingratitude toward our bountiful Lord, and most gracious Redeemer; it were proper for us to be confounded at our extreme Folly, and foul Treachery toward our selves, in betray-  
ing Gen. 3. 2.  
2. 25.



ing our Souls to Guilt, to Regret, to Wrath and Punishment: Who should be ashamed, who not, the holy Psalmist hath well taught us. *Let none that wait on thee be ashamed; let them be ashamed which transgress without cause; and, let the proud be ashamed*—but, *Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed.*

It is true Modesty to be ashamed of doing unworthy and unhandsome Things; but to be ashamed of doing what Reason and Duty require, is pitiful Weakness of Mind.

We do not owe so much Regard to vicious and vain Persons, as to be dashed out of Countenance by them; we should rather by our Masculine Resolution and upright Confidence put them to Confusion.

If Shame be an Evil which we would avoid, the only Remedy thereof we may learn from those Words of the Psalmist, *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to thy testimonies*: But it is a fond Course to shun Disgrace by doing that which alone deserveth it.

*Quid quaso rationis habes verendum ad diem hominis, & nullum Dei non vereri? Bern. Ep. 108.*

Is it not also a wild Thing, to seem modest toward Men, while we are really so bold with God, as presumptuously to offend him, to affront him, to provoke him (as those in the Prophet did) to his face? For so indeed every Sinner doth; and as it is the greatest Inadvertency not to consider God always present with us, so it is the Height of Impudence to sin in his Presence, or to prefer a Regard to Men before the Reverence due to his Eye.

Is it not also great Folly, for declining a little present transient Disgrace, to do that, whereof afterward we shall be grievously and perpetually ashamed; which we shall never remember or reflect upon without confusion, (according to that of the Apostle, *What fruit had ye of those things, whereof ye are now ashamed?*) the Consequence whereof is our standing obnoxious to shame and everlasting contempt?

If we be thus ashamed of God, and of our Duty to him, may he not justly in recompence be ashamed of us, and disdain to own us in Favour and Mercy? He will surely, he hath often declared so; *Whoever, saith our Lord, shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy Angels.*

2. Another Principle, near of kin to the Former, disposing Men to commit Sin, or wave Duty in their open Conversation, is, Fear of losing the Good-will, or getting the Ill-will of Men.

It must often happen, that whoever will be vertuous, and stick to his Duty, will forfeit the Favour of Men, will incur their Displeasure, will provoke their Indignation; by crossing their Humour and Conceit, by implicitly slighting their Opinion, and condemning their Practice; this is the Portion and Fate of strict and stiff Piety; the Friendship of God and the World are not well consistent; and St. Paul's Rule may be converted, *If I should please men, I should not be the servant of Christ*: Hence Men, prizing the Favour of Men, with the Advantages of it, and dreading their Anger, Hatred, Disdain, with the Mischiefs consequent on them, are scared from their Duty.

But in Truth this is a silly, a base, a sorry Fear, arguing wretched Meanness of Spirit, and pitiful Cowardice. For,

Dost thou, fond Wretch, fear to lose the Favour of Man, whose Favour doth avail nothing to thy main Interests, and cannot any-wise considerably benefit thee, (for in no respect dost thou depend on his Will and Providence) but dost not fear being deprived of God's Favour, upon which all thy Good hangeth, wherein thy Felicity consisteth, without which thou art incapable of any Prosperity, of any Security, of any Joy or Comfort?

Dost thou fear the Displeasure of Man, of poor impotent Man, a sorry frail worm, whose breath is in his nostrils, (ready to fly away in every Moment) whose Anger can do thee no real Harm, whose Power can hardly touch thee, can no-wise reach thy Soul, or its Concerns; whilst thou darest not to offend the Eternal Almighty God, under whose Feet thou liest, ready to be crushed into nothing, or stamp down into Hell at his Pleasure?

Darest thou not, O heartless Dastard, to do that, which is in thy Power easily to do, which thou art infinitely concerned to do, which upon so many accounts thou art obliged to do, out of fear to cross thine equal, yea far thine inferior in this Case;



Case; far be that standeth to his Duty, as he hath the better Cause, so he hath the greater Force, and assuredly will defeat all his Opposers?

Art thou, O pusillanimous Slave, in regard to any Creature, thy Fellow-subject and Servant, afraid of expressing thy Loyalty to thy Sovereign Lord, thy Love to infinite Goodness, thy Gratitude to thy best Friend and kindest Benefactor, thy Reverence toward the Divine Majesty, thine Awe of uncontrollable Power: Is this a reasonable, an excusable, a tolerable Fear?

Surely, if ever to be driven out of Heart is reproachful, if ever to be cowed doth argue Infirmity and Abjectness of Spirit, it is in this Case; when we have all the Reason and Obligation in the World to be most courageous and resolute, to fear no Colours, to make our Party good against all Opposition; when we have the greatest necessity to engage us, and the greatest Advantage to encourage us to hold out stoutly; the greatest necessity, seeing all that we have, our Life, our Salvation, our eternal Weal doth lie at Stake; *For it is not a vain thing for you, Deut. 32. 47, because it is your Life*: The greatest Advantage, for that if we will, we are invincible, and assured of an easy Victory, seeing we take Part with God, and have Omnipotency on our side; so that we can say with David, *The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what Man can do unto me: The Lord is my light, and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?*

Psal. 118. 6. Heb. 13. 6.  
Psal. 56. 11. 11. 4. 27. 1, 3. 46. 2.  
Jer. 1. 8. 20. 11. Isa. 41. 10.  
Gen. 26. 24. 15. 1.  
Numb. 14. 9. Deut. 31. 8.  
2 Chron. 20. 17.

There is not indeed to those who are under God's special Protection, and confide in him, any thing in nature, really formidable or terrible; it is his peculiar Attribute to be the Mighty and Terrible One: He recommendeth himself to us as our fear, that is, the special Object of it; we therefore do sacrilegiously wrong him, by fearing any other Thing in such Cases of Competition, and when we are concerned to fear him; whence then we are prohibited to fear the greatest Powers in the World; *Fear not them which kill the Body (if God permit them) but are not able to kill the Soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both Body and Soul in Hell.*

Jer. 5. 22.  
10. 7.  
Rev. 15. 4.  
Deut. 7. 21.  
10. 17. 28. 58.  
Pl. 76. 7, 11.  
99. 3.  
Ila. 8. 12.  
41. 10.  
Matt. 10. 26.  
28.

*Who (saith St. Peter) is he that will (or that can) harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? — Wherefore be not afraid of their Terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your Hearts (by a pure Confidence in him.)*

1 Pet. 3.  
13, 14.

In such Cases, we should be ready to accost the greatest Potentates, in Terms like those of the three brave Youths in Daniel: *O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter: If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery Furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine Hand, O King; But (however) if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy Gods, nor worship thy golden Image which thou hast set up: And if in imitation of so worthy an Example, we should defy the Wrath of the greatest Kings, demanding any sinful Compliance from us, how poor a Thing is it to fear the Displeasure of sorry Companions enticing us to the like? How much more should we defy all the Crew of hectorly Ruffians, and huffing Bragadochios?*

Dan. 3. 16.

While wicked profane Men are so bold and stout in impugning Goodness; we should be courageous in defence of it. *The Righteous is as bold as a lion.*

Prov. 28. 1.

The Fear of God (the which is most reasonable and prudent, and consistent with the bravest Courage) should exclude the Fear of Men; the which is no less vain than base; the which indeed doth involve the wildest Boldness, and most rash Fool-hardiness in the World, pushing us into the most desperate Adventures that can be; while by Sinning we incense the most dreadful Anger, we invade the most formidable Power, we incur the most horrible Dangers, we run headlong into the Jaws of Death and Hell: Such a Mixture there is of base Cowardise, and mad Audacity in Practices issuing from that Principle.

3. Men commonly do neglect the open Practice of Vertue, out of Care to decline Envy; for ill Men seeing others endowed with worthy Qualities, which they want; performing good Deeds, from which their Infirmity or Pravity doth hold them averse; entitled to Commendations, Rewards and Advantages to which they cannot aspire, and whereby they seem to eclipse their Credit, or impair their Interest, or expose their Unworthiness; cannot look on such Persons without an evil Eye, or without conceiving in their Heart malevolent Grudges at them, which they will be apt to vent in spiteful Practices, endeavouring to supplant or blast their



Vertue ; Men are apt to envy the Favourites of God, as they are of Princes. Nor indeed doth any thing more powerfully incite Men to hurt their Neighbour, than such Malignity, being edged by that Anguish, which their sore Eye doth feel ; to shun which Envy, and its mischievous Effects, Men commonly are tempted to withdraw its Cause, their own Vertue, that its bright Lustre may not wound the Sight of such Neighbours.

But thus to appease Envy by deserting Vertue is very fond and absurd. For, Shall I cast away my best Goods, because another would not have me to enjoy them ? Shall I be terribly sick, to cure another's distemper'd Fancy ? Shall I render my self miserable, because another doth not like to see me happy ? Because he doth want Charity, must I forego Innocence ? Because he doth not love me, shall I hate my self ? To please him merely, without bettering him, to ease him of a wholsom Smart, shall I displease God, and abuse my self ?

Would he not be a silly Man, who being envied because he seemeth a Favourite of his Prince, would to gratifie such Enviars offend his Prince ? No surely, this is too fond a regard unto any Man's base Disposition, this is too great a Gratification of an Enemy's Pleasure, this is too slavish a Depression of a Man's self ; rather let him fret, let him torment himself, let him inflict a just Punishment on his own uncharitable and unworthy Humour ; whereby perhaps he may be reduced to discern his Folly, and correct his Fault.

Would any Man upon such Terms part with his Estate, mar his Business, slur his Reputation, or purposely play the fool ? Would any Man become poor, infamous or contemptible, because to be rich, to be prosperous, to be honourable, to be wise are invidious Things ? Much less should a Man upon that Account neglect his Duty, thereby betraying his Soul, discarding the Love and Favour of God, destroying the Satisfaction of his Conscience, and forfeiting his hopes of Felicity : Damages and Mischiefs comparable to which all the Envy and Spight in the World can no-wise bring upon him.

If we would avoid Envy, we should not do it by incurring a worse Evil, and rendring our selves contemptible for Unworthiness ; we should rather damp it by Modesty, Humility, an inoffensive Tenour of Life.

We should surmount it, and quash it by constant blameless Conversation. The which will kill the Envious, or the Envy.

An unquestionable Vertue will stop the Mouth of Detraction, and drive Envy into Corners, not daring to shew it self against it.

4. A common Principle, from whence Neglect of Duty, and Commission of Sin in visible Conversation doth spring, is a fear of Infamy, and Reproach, whereto the strict Practice of Vertue is liable : Men not enduring to bear the odious Censures, the foul Imputations, the ugly Characters, the scurvy Epithets, and opprobrious Names, wherewith the bold and spiteful Enemies of Goodness are wont to asperse and brand its faithful Adherents.

To be deemed weak, credulous, superstitious, formal, timorous, nice, squeamish, scrupulous, strait-laced, conceited, affected, cross, surly, morose, froward, stubborn, pertinacious, proud.

To be termed a foppish Simpleton, doting on Speculations, and enslaved to Rules ; a fantastical Humorist, a precise Bigot, a rigid Stoick, a demure Sneakby, a clownish Singularist, a Non-conformist to ordinary Usage, a stiff Opiniatre ; a Man of a pitiful narrow Spirit, pent up within a small Compass, confined by Principles, fettered by Laws, living in Bondage to his Conscience.

These and the like hard Censures, foul Reproaches, and abusive Scoffs, even all which Invention quickned by Envy, Choler, rancorous Spite, and aided by the malicious Fiend, can suggest, wherewith the profane Crew of Men usually do conspire to daub and persecute those who refuse to comply with their unconscionable Extravagancies and Impieties, Men can hardly brook, and thence to shun them yield up all, cross their Reason, prostitute their Conscience, violate all their Obligations ; chusing rather to be justly reproachable for bad Actions, than unjustly reproached for good.

But with such a Person, who is thus diverted from his Duty, let me expostulate:

*Nihil est turpius quam sapientis vitam  
ab insipientium sermone pendere. Cic.  
de Fin. 2. (p. 147.)*

Doest thou well to regard what unbridled Tongues out of a wanton Mind and corrupt Heart do sputter and foam ? Shall thy Practice depend on their loose Wit or licentious Talk, so that



that thou must do nothing which they shall not be in humour to commend ?

Wilt thou renounce all Wisdom, abandon thy best Interest, forfeit thy Happiness to decline a Squib, or a Flurt ? *Quid de te alii loquantur, ipsi videant. Scipio apud Cic. in Somn.*

Would not he be a stark Fool who would be railed or jeered out of his Way in Travel, out of his Business in Traffick, out of his Estate, or real Interest upon any Occasion ; and is he not evidently far more such, who will be flouted out of his Duty, out of his Salvation, out of any spiritual Advantage ? Was not the Practice of David more adviseable, who said, *The proud have had me in derision, yet have I* Psal. 119. 51 *not declined from thy Law ?*

David, a great King, a Man of singular Courage and Gallantry, a glorious Hero ; yet even him did bold and base People deride. Whom will not profane Impudence assail ? Whom will not they attempt to deter from Goodness ?

Art thou so blind, as not to discern whence it cometh, that they disparage Vertue ? That is, from their extreme Vanity and Rashness, which move them to speak any thing without Consideration or Discretion ; from their great naughtiness and weakness, their being bewitched with Pleasure, and besotted with Vice, which engageth them to take part so furiously with them ; from their malignity, and spite against that which crosseth their fond Humours and exorbitant Lusts ; from their Pride which swelleth against those, who by contrary Practice dissent from their Folly, and reprove their Wickedness, and eclipse their Repute ; from their Envy which repineth at thy appearing better and happier than themselves, thy excelling them in true Worth, thy enjoying that Satisfaction which they want, thy attaining that blessed Hope, to which they cannot aspire ; and seeing that their Reproaches do issue from such Principles, wilt thou regard them ?

Are their Words any Slander, who being professed Enemies of Goodness, do naturally impugn it by the readiest Arms they have, a virulent and petulant Tongue ?

Can their dirty Language, bespattering good things, alter their Nature, or render that dishonourable and odious, which in it self is most excellent, most amiable, most useful and profitable ?

Is it not indeed a Commendation of Vertue, which should encourage us the more to like it, to honour it, to embrace it, that vain, wild, dissolute Persons, distemper'd in their Minds, notoriously void of Discretion, of Integrity, of Sobriety, do pretend to vilifie and disgrace it ?

As their Commendation is of no worth, so their Reproach is less considerable.

Dost thou not disparage thine own Judgment by heeding theirs, or suffering it to be of any Consideration with thee in the Conduct of thy Life ?

Dost thou take them to be serious in this, or to speak in good earnest, when they reproach Vertue, and slight the plain Dictates of Reason, the clear Light of natural Conscience, the expresse Commands of God, the apparent Concerns of their own Soul ? They who are sober in nothing, how can they be serious in this ? Why should they seem judicious in such a Case ?

Is it not evidently better to be slandered by giddy, leud, ungodly Wretches, who mind not what they say, nor care what they do, whose Judgment therefore can signifie nothing ; than really to deserve reproof ; and thence certainly to incur Blame from all frigid, sober, considerate, wise and vertuous Persons, who judge advisedly and uprightly about Things ?

Is it not better to undergo their severest Censure, and most biting Scoffs, than to be condemned of Folly and Baseness by thy own Mind, and reviled by thy own Conscience ?

Is it not infinitely better to be unjustly defamed by Men, than to be disreputed by God, exposed to most disgraceful Condemnation at his Bar, and thrown into that State of everlasting Ignominy ? *Dan. 12. 2.*

*Οὐδὲς παύει τὰς σπουδαίας ἐπαινεῖν ἑαυτὸν. Irid. Pelus. Ep. 2. 220.*

*(Οὐ δὲ δοκεῖν ἄριστον, ἀλλ' εἶναι δίκαιον. Τὸ δοκεῖν ἔστιν περὶ ἡμᾶς, ὡς αὖτε ἔστι ὑμῶν ἀνόμιον. Greg. Naz. Orat.—de sede Const.) Ant. 8. §. 1.*

*Maius displicere laudari est. Sen. Excerpt. (p. 690.)*

*Non potest bonus non esse, qui bonis placet ; nec minus validum argumentum mihi videtur, quod bonus sit si malis displiceat. Bern. Ep. 248.*

*Ἀρετῆς. 1 Pet. 2. 15.*

*Ἀποστολ. 2 Thess. 3. 2.*

*Ant. 3. §. 4.*

*Quanta dementia est vereri ne infametur ab infamibus ? Sen. Ep. 91.*

*Moveret si iudicio hoc fecerunt, nunquam morbo faciunt. Sen. Exc.*

*Ego cum à nostro Catone laudabar, vel reprehendi me à ceteris facile patiebar. Cic. de Orat.*



*Tu ergo plus opprobria times quam tormenta?* Sc. Bern. Ep. 108.  
Matt. 25. 41.

*Aequissimo animo ad honestum consilium per mediam infamiam tendam,* Sc. Sen. Ep. 81.

*Non vis esse justus sine gloria? at mercede saepe justus esse debet cum infamia.* Sen. Ep. 113.  
Ant. 5. 5. 3. 11. 16. 9. 18.

It is the Lot of all good Men (for Probation, Exercise and Improvement of their Vertue to be persecuted) at least in some times, as when St. Paul said, *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer Persecution*; And surely he that sincerely loveth God, would even desire Occasion of suffering somewhat for his Sake, in Testimony of his faithful Affection: But what more tolerable Persecution, what more easie Martyrdom could we wish, than to be lashed by a scurrilous Tongue; or rather to observe the Ears of others to be infested with the Buzzes of Detraction? What is this but a little Air stirred in vain, but a mere sound or blast of Wind, importing nought to him that doth not mind it, or will not be affected with it? The which surely to a sound Heart and pure Conscience cannot be very sensible; a Man must have a froward Temper, or a tender Ear, whom a little such creaking, or grating noise doth much vex; all its force is broken, all its Mischief is remedied easily, by Neglect or Contempt.

*Quid stultum homine verba mesuente?*  
Sen. Ep. 91.

It is in a manner more commendable to suffer for being Good, than for being a Christian; a truer Martyrdom to suffer for the Temper than for the Name of Christ; for doing well, than for professing Truth.

Who indeed had ever been good in any notable Degree, if some had minded the Opinion, or the Discourse of such Men, whom in all times the great Adversary of Goodness and Maligner of our Welfare hath excited to deter Men from Vertue by thus abusing it? Hath it not ever been the Portion of good Men to suffer in this kind?

Jer. 20. 7.  
Psal. 44. 16, 17. 57. 3, 4. 119.  
51. 69. 10.  
Job 12. 4. Sap. 5. 3.

*Εμπαιγμών ἢ μαστοῦν πᾶσαν ἔλαβον.*  
Heb. 11. 36.  
\* Heb. 12. 3. *Ἀναλογισαὶς* —  
2 Cor. 6. 8. *Διὰ δόξης, ἢ αἰτιμίας.*

*Ὁνειδισμοῖς ἢ ἐλέησι θεοῦ τελευτήσωμεν.*  
Heb. 10. 33.

Acts 5. 41.  
2 Cor. 12. 10.  
*Εὐδοκῶ ἐν ὑβρεσιν* —  
Matt. 5. 11.  
Luke 6. 22.  
1 Pet. 4. 14.

Was not \* our Lord himself, were not his Apostles, were not all the Prophets of old, were not all the Heroes in Goodness of all times thus pursued with Obloquy? What vile Imputation, what Name of Reproach can be devised, wherewith the spiteful World did not besmear them?

Yet were they much disturbed at it, were they any-wise discouraged or scared by it from their Duty? No; they rather did find Satisfaction and Delight in it; it rather did heighten their Mind, and strengthen their Resolution; it begat a gallant, and triumphant Disdain of such Injuries, enlivening and animating them in their carrier of Duty; they did embrace Reproach for Righteousness not only with content, as their proper Lot and Portion from God's Providence, but with Joy, as their special Glory and Happiness, from divine Goodness; feeling it most true, what our Master taught, *Blessed are ye, when Men shall revile you, and shall say all manner of Evil against you falsely for my sake: Blessed are ye, when Men shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil for the Son of Man's sake; and according to St. Peter, εὐφρανέσθε, if ye be reproached for the Name of Christ* (that is, for conscientiously discharging any Christian Duty) *happy are ye, for the Spirit of Glory and of God resteth on you; on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.*

In fine, it is all Reason, and it is the express Command of God, that in such Cases we should not regard the Censures, or the Reproaches of any Mortal: It is a Part of our Duty to despise Obloquy, to expose and lose Reputation for God's sake. For *Hearken* (saith he) *unto me ye that know Righteousness, the people in whose heart is my Law; fear ye not the Reproach of Men, neither be ye afraid of their Revilings; for the Moth shall eat them up like a Garment, and the Worm shall eat them like Wool: but my Righteousness shall be for ever, and my Salvation from Generation to Generation.*

5. Men commonly decline the publick Practice of Duty out of Affectation, thereby to be deemed more honest and sincere, or to decline the Suspicion of being Hypocritical.

As this is the most obvious and usual Calumny wherewith dissolute People do charge good Men; so to Men of generous Dispositions, it is of all Censures most poinant,



painant, as most crossing their Temper, according to which as they hate to be, so they can hardly endure to be counted or called Dissemblers; whence often they chuse rather to seem indifferent to Goodness, than zealously affected to it: they rather wave some Points of Duty, than for the Performance of them expose themselves to that Imputation.

But this Proceeding is very unreasonable. For,

What can be more absurd, than to be really and notoriously bad (as whoever omitteth his Duty is) to prevent a surmise of being such? Or to be truly worse than we should be, that we may not be deemed worse than we seem?

How can we more gratifie the Enemy of our Salvation, than by approving our selves in Truth to be what he would falsely challenge us to be, Mockers of God, and Traitors to our own Soul?

Is it not a vain Thing to regard that kind of Censure, which it is impossible for any Man to escape, upon other Terms than of being very naughty? For wicked Men will never fail to load those with this Charge who will not comply with their Follies, and *run with them to the same excess of riot*, or are any-wise better than themselves; it is inevitable for a staunch Man not to be stigmatized for a Hypocrite by them. 1 Pet. 4. 4.

We have certainly more reason to be satisfied with the sure Conscience and Sense of our own Integrity, than to be moved with the presumptuous Assertions of any Wretch devoid of Justice or Charity: His Censure being plainly Injurious, and contrary to all Rules of Equity, which prescribe that no Man should judge of things unknown, or uncertain, is utterly despicable. 2 Cor. 1. 12.  
1 John 3. 21.

The Testimony of God (*who is greater than our Hearts*) perfectly knowing our Sincerity, may abundantly support us; it is a great wrong to him for us to value the rash Suspicions of Men, when we are secure of his Knowledge, who *seeth all our Works, and trieth our Hearts*; who hath said, that *if we commit our way to him, and trust in him, he will bring forth our Righteousness as the Light, and our Judgment as the Noon-day*. 1 John 3. 20.  
1 Thess. 2. 4.  
Gal. 1. 10.  
Col. 3. 23.  
Eph. 6. 5.  
1 Cor. 4. 4.  
Psalm. 37. 4.

It is certainly better to be called Hypocrite by Men for doing our Duty, than to be treated as a Hypocrite by God for neglecting it; for all those who upon any Account do violate God's Laws; shall *have their Portion with the Hypocrites*, in that disconsolate Place, *where is weeping and gnashing of Teeth*. And good reason; for indeed by thus avoiding Hypocrisy, we really do incur it; by seeking to preserve an Opinion of Sincerity, we forfeit the reality of it; by the Practice of disavowing the Fear of God, and Care of Goodness, we do constitute our selves certain Hypocrites, and Impostors; dissembling our Thoughts, smothering our Conscience, deluding our Neighbours with false Conceits of us, feigning that Indifference which we have not, pretending to act without regret or remorse, which we cannot do; seeming otherwise than we are, signifying otherwise than we mean, doing otherwise than we judge fit, or like to do; that is, if we be not stark Infidels, or utterly void of Conscience. Matt. 24. 51.

This is Hypocrisy turned the wrong side outward, disguising a Man in a fouler Shape, and uglier Garb, than that which is natural and true.

And if we compare the two Hypocrisies, (that of pretending Conscience, which we want, and this of denying Conscience, which we have; that of seeming better than we are, this of seeming worse than we may be) this in nature may well seem more vile, in tendency more dangerous, in effect more mischievous than the other.

There is in both the same Falshood, the same Prevarication, the like Contempt and Abuse of God; but the Hypocrite of whom we speak doth worse things, more directly wrongful to God, more prejudicial to Goodness, more harmful to the World.

The specious Hypocrite counterfeiting Goodness, and *having a Form of Godliness, without the Power and Reality of it*, doth yield to God some Part (the exterior Part) of his due Honour and Respect; but the sneaking Hypocrite, disowning Goodness, doth apparently desert, slight and affront God; the one serveth God with his Face, and his Voice, though *his Heart be far from him*; the other doth not so much as sacrifice a Carcase of Obedience to him; That may bring some Credit and Advantage to Goodness, strengthen its Interest by his Vote and Countenance; this by not avowing it doth assuredly weaken its Reputation and Cause; that Hypocrisy, as such is a private and single Evil, whereby a Man doth indeed prejudice himself, but doth not injure his Neighbour, yea may edifie him by the appearing (which



(which in this Respect is the same with the real) Goodness of his Example ; but this Hypocrisy is a general Mischief, a scandalous Evil, a contagious Pestilence, whereby a Man not only harmeth himself, but wrongeth many others, seducing them into Dissoluteness, infecting the World with base Indifference to Good, and easiness to comply with Sin.

It is indeed a sad Thing, that God and Goodness should be deserted upon this Account ; that most Men should be so uncharitable, so unjust, so imprudent as to suspect all good Men of Hypocrisy ; as if it were incredible that any Man should heartily love or fear God ; (when it is rather strange that any Man should do otherwise) that any Man in good earnest, or otherwise than in Pretence and for sinister Respects should embrace Virtue (when it is marvellous, that a reasonable Man should decline it) that so many of themselves inclinable to Goodness, should be so weak as to be deterr'd from it by so vain an Apprehension ; and that the Name of Hypocrisy should drive away Piety ; that it should become desirable, that Hypocrites might abound in the World, lest Religion both in truth and shew should be discarded.

In fine, we may otherwise suppress this odious Imputation, than by deserting Goodness ; we may demonstrate our selves serious and sincere by an inflexible adherence to it, in the continual Tenour of our Practice ; and especially in some instances of Duty, which are hardly consistent with Hypocrisy, for no Man can hold long in a strained Posture ; no Man will take much Pains, or encounter great Difficulties, or sustain grievous Hardships and Afflictions, cross his Appetites, forego Gains, and Honours, for that which he doth not heartily like and love ; he may counterfeit in Ceremonies and Formalities, but he will hardly feign Humility, Meekness, Patience, Contentedness, Temperance, at least uniformly and constantly. Even the Patient enduring this Censure will confute it, and wipe off the Asperision of Hypocrisy.

## SERMON XXXV.

### Provide Things Honest in the Sight of all MEN.

2 COR. VIII. 21.

*Providing for honest things not only in the sight of the Lord, but in the sight of Men.*

6. **A**Nother great Impediment of good Conversation before Men, is a Desire of seeming courteous and civil ; Men usually conform to sinful Practices, because they would not be held Clowns, rude and distastful in Conversation ; they would not give Offence to their Company, by clashing with their Humour ; by preferring their own Judgment, and seeming to be in their own Conceit wiser and better than those with whom they converse ; by provoking them to think they are held Fools or worse by such Non-compliance.

This is an ordinary Snare to easie and ingenuous Natures ; but the Ground of it is very unreasonable : For although in Matters of Indifference, where Duty and Sin do not fall into Consideration, to be limber and ductile as can be (which is the Temper of the best Metal) to have no Humour of our own, or to resign up all our Humour to the Will of our Company, to condescend unto, and comport with



with any thing; to raise no Faction or Debate, but presently to yield to the swaying Vote; to *become all things to all men* in a ready Complaisance, be Wisdom and good Manners, doth argue good Nature, good Understanding, good Breeding; is a rightly gentle and obliging Quality.

Yet where Duty is concerned, where Sinning or not Sinning is the Case, there Courtesy hath no room; there it is vain to pretend any Engagement to Complaisance.

For surely it is better to be held uncivil, than to be ungodly; it is far better Manners to offend any number of Men, than to be rude with God, to clash with his Pleasure, to offer Indignity and Injury to him; there can be no Competition in the Case; no shadow of Reason, why we should displease God to please Men.

As it were more civil to offend ten thousand Boors (Peasants) than to affront our King; so to offend ten thousand Kings than to affront our God were in Policy more adviseable, and in Equity more justifiable; so the Royal Psalmist did judge; for *Princes (said he) did sit and speak against me, but thy Servant did meditate in thy Statutes;* Psalm 119. 23. *so Moses, so Samuel, so Elias, so Jeremy, so Daniel, so the three noble Children, so the holy Apostles did conceive;* Matt. 10. 16. who being Persons otherwise very courteous and gentle; yet had not that Consideration of mighty Princes, as not rather to approve their Consciences to God, than to comply with their Pleasure: How much less should we upon pretence of Courtesy toward inferiour Persons, in ordinary Conversation transgress our Duty?

Our own Interest in such Cases is too considerable to be sacrificed to the Conceit or Pleasure of any Men; Our Salvation is no Matter, wherein Formality of Respect should intervene, or have any Weight; to gain or forfeit our eternal Happiness, is no Business of Complement or Ceremony: It were a silly Courtesy for a Man to wait on his Company to Hell; a wild Point of Gallantry, to be damned in Complaisance.

Who would take himself to be obliged in good Manners to hold on the round in a Cup of Poison; to leap down after those, who from blind Inadvertency, or wilful Perverseness tumble into a Gulf, to gash or stab himself in Conformity to some desperate Folk? Much less can a Man be engaged out of any such regard (in compliance with the mistake, weakness, or pravity of others) to incur Guilt, to provoke divine Wrath, to expose his Soul to utter ruin, to undergo a Damage, for which all the World cannot make any Reparation or Amends?

Is it not far better to disgust, than to gratify those, who have so little Consideration of our Welfare; who indeed are very discourteous and heinously rude, in offering to tempt us unto Sin, to desire a compliance therein with them; to expect from us, that we should adventure so much for their vain Satisfaction?

Indeed, to gratify such Persons, were great and noble Courtesy; but really to do it, we should not go this way; for this is a spurious Courtesy, rather Conspiracy and Treachery, than Courtesy.

It is in Truth, at the Bottom, great Discourtesy (involving much Unkindness, real Abuse, unmerciful Inhumanity and Cruelty) to second, to countenance, to support or encourage any Man in doing that which manifestly tendeth unto his great Prejudice, to his utter Bane.

It is the truest Civility (implying real Humanity, genuine Charity, faithful Kindness, and tender Pity) to stand off in such Cases, and by refusing (in a modest, gentle, discreet manner refusing) to concur in Sin with our Friends and Companions, to check them, to warn them, to endeavour their amendment and retreat from pernicious Courses; to exercise that *Compassion* toward them, which *St. Jude* calleth, *pulling them out of the fire.* Jud. 22, 23.

In such Cases to repel them, yea to reprove them, is the greatest Favour we can shew them; it is not only safe for our selves, but kind to them to observe *St. Paul's* Precept, *Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them;* Eph. 5. 1, 7. for which Deportment whenever they come to themselves, and soberly reflect on things, they will thank and bless us; and it will happen, as the *Wiseman* saith, *He that rebuketh a man, afterward shall find more favour than he that flattereth with his tongue.* Prov. 28. 23.

In fine, if we thoroughly scan the Business, we shall find, that commonly it is not abundance of Courtesy, but a defect of Charity, or of Conscience, or of Courage,



rage, which disposeth us to reservedness, or to Concurrence upon such Occasions, in regard to allowable Practices.

7. Another Snare which catcheth and holdeth us in open Practice of Sin, or Neglect of Duty, is deference to the Opinion, Authority, Custom, or Example of others; to the common Opinion, to the Authority of great and leading Persons, to the fashion of the World, and prevalent Humour of the Age.

A Man (not consulting or not confiding in his own reason) is apt to credit the Vogue, to defer a kind of Veneration to the general Sentiments of Men (especially of Men qualified) apprehending that allowable or tolerable, which Men commonly by their Practice seem to approve. He is prone to suspect his own Judgment of mistake, when it doth thwart the Opinion of so many; and hardly can have the Heart to oppose his single Apprehensions against so common Notions.

The commonness of Sin, and multitude of Offenders, doth in a manner authorize and warrant it, doth at least seem to excuse and extenuate it.

A Man easily conceiteth himself safe enough, while he is in the Herd, while he walketh in the Road, when he hath the broad coverlet of general Usage to throwd him from Blame: He doth at least fancy Consolation in undergoing a Doom with so many.

But upon many Accompts, this is a very fallacious and dangerous ground of Practice.

Ant. 9. §. 18. For Multitudes are no good Authors of Opinion, or Guides of Practice.

11. §. 4. §. 3. Wise Men have ever been apt to suspect that to be bad, which is most commonly admired and affected.

Nothing is more vulgarly noted, than the injudiciousness, the blindness, the levity, temerity, and giddiness of the Vulgar; temper, inclination, appetite, interest, and the like, perverting Biasses have most sway on them; any specious appearance, any slight motive, any light rumour doth serve to persuade them any thing, to drive them any whither.

All Ages have deplored the paucity of wise and good Men; the genuine Disciples of our Lord, and sons of wisdom, have ever been *pauca greges, a small flock*: Our Lord hath told us, that *narrow is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat*.

Wherefore popular Use is no good Argument of Truth or Right; nor can yield any Warrant, or any colour for infringing God's Law: No *Plébiscitum* can be of Force against it.

God never did allow the People to exempt themselves or us from their Loyalty, or Obedience to his Laws; they are universally obligatory; he hath commanded all men to repent; he hath threatned that otherwise all shall perish; and that tribulation and anguish shall be upon every soul of man that doeth evil.

He by expresse Prohibitions hath obviated all such Pretences and Pleas; Thou shalt not (saith he) follow a multitude to do evil; and, Say ye not a Confederacy—neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid, (fear not to dissent and disconsent from the way of this people.)

And, If sinners entice thee, (how many soever they be, though it be a sinful nation, a people laden with Iniquity, a seed of evil doers) consent thou not.

Indeed if we consider it, it is so far from excusing Sin, that it is an Aggravation thereof, that we therein conspire with others, and the more the worse: To oppose God singly, is not quite so criminal, as to join with a Rout in hostility and rebellion against him; for hereby God's Authority is more shaken, and his Honour more rudely violated; hereby we do not only sin our selves, but contribute to the Sin of others, encourage them to it, and uphold them in it by our Patronage.

Hereby we become accessary to the Degeneracy and general Apostasy of the Age.

Hereby we do join our forces to pull down God's Judgments on our Country, and by promoting general Corruption, induce general Vengeance.

The Multitude of Sinners is so far from sheltering any one from Wrath, that it surely draweth it upon all; forcing the Almighty not only for the Assertion of his own Authority, and Vindication of his Honour; but for the Good of the People, and purgation of the World, to pour forth remarkable Vengeance.

For



For Example : In the time of *Noah* did God spare the old world when all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth, did that stave off God's Wrath, or stop the Deluge ? No, it did grievously provoke him, it did in a manner necessitate him to destroy man from the face of the earth ; bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly. Gen. 6. 12. 2 Pet. 2. 5.

Did the number of Sinners in *Sodom* prevent Vengeance on them ? Was it not that which did condemn them to an overthrow so dismal, pulling down Fire and Brimstone on them ? 2 Pet. 2. 6.

What was the reason of that woeful Captivity, into which *Israel* was carried ? Was it not because they were all grievous revolvers, and had so generally conspired in Wickedness, that the Prophet could say, *Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man ; if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it ?* Was it not this which did wring from God that Sentence, *Shall I not visit for these things ? shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this ?* Jer. 6. 28, Jer. 5. 1, Jer. 5. 29.

When the Case is such in any Community, as it was in *Israel*, when God said, *From the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it*, then Judgment is necessary, and it must assuredly follow, *Your Country is desolate* — Then God, his Patience being tired, and his Goodness unsupportably abused, will cry out, *Ah, I will ease me of my adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies.* Isa. 1. 6. Isa. 1. 7.

God, as Governour of the World, in discharge of his Office, for clearing his Honour, for assuring his Majesty, out of regard to publick Good, for the Safety and Welfare of his Subjects, is concerned to chastise notorious, scandalous, and infectious Sin : He may reserve private Sins for the final Doom, when the hidden things of darkness shall be brought to light, and the counsels of hearts manifested, and all Things shall receive just award and recompence ; but it is expedient to punish publick Sins publickly : They who declare their Sin as *Sodom*, with outrageous Impudence, are like to find a Punishment like that in a common Vengeance. 1 Cor. 4. 15. Isa. 3. 24.

We should therefore in such a Case be the more careful of our Conversation, more shy of sinful Compliance with others, for preventing publick Calamity ; for that our single Piety and Innocence (or the Goodness of a few) may save our Country, together with our selves, from Wrath and Ruin ; seeing it is the gracious Method of God, in regard to a few righteous Men, to spare the rest ; to release a Nation from deserved Punishment ; for if in *Sodom* had been found ten righteous Persons, it had escaped that horrible Destruction ; And *Israel* in *Hezekiah's* Time (although in a very great and general Corruption of that Age) by a few good Men did avoid the like Doom ; according to that of the Prophet, *Except the Lord of Hosts, had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom.* Gen. 38. 32. Isa. 1. 9. Lam. 3. 23.

The Righteousness of one *Noah* did save the Race of Mankind from being extinct.

The Zeal of one *Phinehas* did stop that Plague, which had devoured *Israel* ; *Phinehas* (said God himself) *the Son of Eleazar hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel ; while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.* Num. 25. 11. Psal. 106. 30.

If there had been such another publick Patron of Piety, at the time when *Israel* was so severely punished by Deliverance into Captivity, it would have obstructed that lamentable Event : God himself so testified ; for, *I sought* (said he) *for a Man among them, that would make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it ; but I found none ; therefore have I poured out mine Indignation upon them* — and, *Run ye to and fro* — (said he again) *Seek* — *if ye can find a man* — in *Jerusalem* — and *I will pardon it.* Ezek. 22. 30. Jer. 5. 1.

Wherefore beside regard to our own Welfare, a Consideration of publick Good, Charity toward the World, a Compassion of our Country should withhold us from conspiring in common Transgressions, or Omissions of Duty.

If we sin with all, we must suffer with all ; nor will the having so much Company in Suffering yield any true Comfort to us ; *Socios habuisse doloris* (to have Companions in Sorrow) is in it self a pitiful Solace, and an unworthy one, favouring of inhuman Malignity ; for our Fellows will bear no share with us, or take off any thing from the Burthen of our Pains, which will be equally to them and us extreme. God will not oversee us. 1 Eccles. 16. 17.



Can it be any considerable Satisfaction, that we are Sick of an epidemical Disease, that sweepeth away multitudes about us and with us?

Is it better for one Part, that the whole Body is overspread with a noisom Leprosie? That its Fellow-members are tortured with grievous Anguish?

Can the sorest Pains of our Brethren cure the Akins of our Heart, assuage the Pangs of our Conscience, or slack the consuming Flames beneath?

What Advantage can we enjoy from going down to Hell in a Troop? What Ease shall we find there from being encompassed with the doleful Groans, the piercing Shrieks, and dismal Howlings of Fellow-sufferers in that infernal Dungeon?

Alas! will it not rather augment our Pains, to hear the sore Complaints, the fierce Accusations, the desperate Curses of those, whom our Compliance hath engaged, or encouraged, or confirmed and hardened in that wicked Practice, which did throw them into that disconsolate Case?

8. Another Principle (near of kin to the former) is a Dislike of Singularity, and Solitude; together with the Consequences and Imputations usually cleaving thereto.

One would not be a Man by himself; to be gazed on, to be hooted at as a kind of Prodigy, to be deemed an extravagant, odd, humourous, fantastick Person, conceited of his own Opinion, addicted to his own way, arrogating to himself a liberty of crossing and condemning, or contemning the World; therefore he runneth along with the Age, complying with its sinful Customs, and naughty Fashions.

*He is grievous unto men even to behold;  
for his life is not like other mens, his ways  
are of another fashion. Sap. 2. 14, &c.*

But this is a vain Principle; for really to be singular is no Fault, to be held so is no Disgrace; it is rather in many Cases laudable and honourable; and if in any most reasonable, 'tis in this.

Doth not Singularity, or Paucity, encrease the Price and Estimation of every valuable Thing? What maketh a Jewel, but Rarity? What but that maketh a Diamond more precious than a Pebble?

Do not Men for singular Eminency in any Art, Skill, Faculty, Endowment, gain Credit and Renown? What recommended to Posterity the Names of *Apelles*, *Praxiteles*, *Phidias*, but excelling in their Art beyond the ordinary Rate? What gave to *Demosthenes* and *Cicero* their Esteem, but a singular Knock of Eloquence? To what did *Alexander* and *Cesar* owe their Fame, but to an extraordinary Valour? Whence got *Socrates* such a Name, but from his singular Wisdom? Whence *Fabritius*, *Aristides*, *Cato*, but from their singular Integrity?

Why then should it be a Discouragement or Reproach to be singular or extraordinary in the noblest of all Faculties, that of living well, in the most excellent of all Perfections, that of Vertue?

In Truth a Man is hardly capable of a greater Commendation than this, that he is singularly good; that he surpasseth the vulgar Level, and mounteth near Heaven in the divinest Qualities; that no bad Example or Fashion hath been able to seduce or corrupt him; this should render him to be most highly esteemed, and most dearly cherished, as a choice Ornament of the World, as a most useful Instrument of good to Mankind.

It were desirable that Vertue were more common in the World, but surely its being more rare doth render it more admirable, more illustrious, more glorious.

Heroical Vertue is therefore such, because so few do attain, or can reach it;

— *pauci quos equus amavit*  
Jupiter, —

A few, who by special Assistance of God's Grace, and by extraordinary Resolution, do surmount the Obstacles which are set against it.

*Inter bonos bonus esse salutem habet,  
inter malos vero & laudem; illud tanta  
facilitatis est, quanta & securitatis; hoc  
tanta virtutis, quanta & difficultatis.  
Bern. Ep. 25.*

It was well said of St. Bernard, To be good among good men hath safety; but to be such among bad men hath also praise; (a Man will be saved by that, but he should be commended for this) that hath as much facility as it hath security, this is of as much worth as difficulty.

Indeed



Indeed if we consider the Nature of Things, or consult the History of Times, we shall find that Vertue must be, and ever hath been liable to this Imputation; it is commonly so hard and hazardous to be good in any notable Degree, that few will take the Pains, or undergo the Hardships requisite to attain or exercise it.

Hence the best Men, (who are such not according to the blind Conjecture of Men; but in God's sure Esteem) are an elect, and peculiar sort of People, a few choice Persons cull'd out of a great Lump of those, who either reject Religion, or embrace it only in verbal Profession, or formal Shew.

Hence it hath been the Observation, and Complaint of all Times,

*Rari quippe boni.* —

Juv. Sat. 13.  
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Hence the most renowned Men for Goodness, and who by God's special Care have been recommended to us as Patterns thereof, have been very singular in it; and their Singularity did much enhance the Price of their Goodness.

It is said of Enoch, that he walked with God; but it seemeth with small, or no Company beside; otherwise it would not have been so particularly recorded of him.

Noah was content to be a Man by himself, a preacher of righteousness against the Vogue, and a Practicer thereof against the Stream of his whole Age; for, thee (said God of him, that is, thee alone) have I seen righteous before me in this generation: He was no less singular in his Goodness, than in his Salvation.

Abraham had no common Qualities, which moved God to pick him out, and separate him from the rest of Mankind (to single him from his kindred and country) to confer special Graces and Blessings on him.

Lot had his righteous soul vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked, which did enclose him; yet so that he did retain a sound and clear Integrity among them.

Job had this Testimony from God, examining Satan concerning him, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth; a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

What was the Resolution of Joshua? Did he value being sole or singular in his Practice? No, for propounding to his People whether they would chuse God or not, he told them, that however it were, although all of them should forsake God, he was resolved to stick fast to him, not regarding their Practice; But (said he) as for me and my house we will serve the Lord; that indeed was nobly resolved; it was a Resolution worthy of such an Heroe, to stand alone in so good and wise a Choice against his whole Nation. It was a Resolution suitable to that his Behaviour, which he expressed in these Words, My brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt; but I wholly followed the Lord my God; in regard to which his Camerader Caleb, being of the same Spirit with him, is called a Man of another spirit; different from, and above the mean Spirit of his Fellows.

What was David? Was he not a Man by himself? Was he not like one, of whom the Poet saith,

*Egregium sanctumque virum si cerno, bimembri  
Hoc monstrum puero, vel facta comparo mula.*

Juv. Sat. 13.

So he telleth us, I (saith he) am become as it were a monster unto many, but my sure trust is in thee.

\*A Wonder. N. Tr. Psal. 71. 7. 119. 51.  
1 Pet. Ev. 8. 27.

Did Elias, to shun the Imputation of Singularity, or in regard to common Practice, swerve from his faithful adherence to God's Service; although he did passionately resent and bewail his Case? No; for, I have, said he, been very jealous for the Lord of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away.

What was the Case of Jeremy? I (saith he) was a derision to all my people, and their song all the day; yet did he maintain his Integrity, and was a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and a brazen wall against the whole land; against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, and against the people of the land.

What was the Condition of our Lord? Was not he a prodigy spoken against by all, against whom both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the



Acts 4. 27. *tiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together; who trod the wine-press alone, and*  
 Isa. 63. 3. *of the people there was none with him; who in his Life was regarded by few, and at*  
 John 12. 37. *his Death (when he yielded his great Attestation to Truth and Righteousness) was*  
 John 16. 32. *deserted by all?*  
 Matt. 26. 31.

56. What was the *Apostles Condition*? Were they not singular Men? Were not they held a *Set*, every where spoken against, and impugned with all violence of Spirit and Rage? Were not they made a *spectacle to the World*, to be gazed at with scorn and reproach? Did not they (a few, simple, poor, weak folk) in Doctrine and Practice cross and controul the World, confusing, reproving, condemning the generality of Men, of Error, of Folly, of Wickedness?

It can therefore be no just Blame, or reasonable Discouragement to appear singular in the Practice of Virtue.

Such a Singularity is no good Argument of fond Conceitedness, of wilful Humour, of arrogant Pride. For,

Can it be fond Conceitedness to follow the Dictates of the best Reason, to observe the Advices of the wisest Men in all times, to follow the Direction and Conduct of infinite Wisdom, to embrace that which in most Cases natural Light, common Sense, and continual Experience do approve? Is it not wildness to do otherwise, though all should do it?

Can it be wilful Humour to hold fast our best Interest, our truest Comfort, our eternal Salvation? Is it not rather so, to comply with a *perverse generation*, in running headlong to their own Ruin?

Can it be Pride or Arrogance, to acknowledge our Maker; to be Loyal and Dutiful to our heavenly Sovereign; to fear the Almighty God, to submit to his will, to tremble at his word, to be afraid of his Judgments, to shun his fierce Anger and severe Vengeance?

Is it a bad Ambition to seek that Honour and immortal Glory, which God doth offer; to shun that everlasting Shame and Contempt, which he doth menace?

Is it not rather monstrous Presumption, and enormous Vanity, to consort and conspire with Rebels against God's Law, with Despisers of his Grace?

In fine, when the most Men are foolish and vain, when the World is depraved and dissolute, it is necessary that the best Reason should be called humour, and the wisest Men should be deemed extravagant; that the best things should be slighted, and the best Persons represented with odious Characters: But hence to renounce Wisdom and Goodness is abominably absurd; as if we should therefore put out our Light, because it is Night about us; or in deep Winter should put off our Cloaths among the wild *Indians*.

9. Of Affinity to the foregoing Principles is this most plausible Apology for smothering our Conscience, namely, a prudential Apprehension, that we shall not come off well in openly avowing and abetting Goodness, so as to do any good, or service to it thereby; but shall thereby rather work prejudice and disservice to it.

The Age (will such a wise Man say) is incorrigibly degenerate; Wickedness is not only bold and impudent, but even outrageously insolent; so that to appear strictly good, is a kind of Scandal; to pretend Conscience for our Rule of Action, is to be ridiculous; to patronize Duty, is to provoke Scorn and Obloquy; to mention Religion, is to prostitute and profane it; to concern God in our doing, is to expose his most sacred and venerable Name to Irrision and foul Abuse.

Such is the Posture of Things, that of all the Sects and Factions which divide the World, that of *Epicurean* Scorners and Mockers is become the most Formidable; with disdainful Pride insulting and vapouring over the Professors of Religion; Persecuting all soberness of Mind and staunchness of Manners with a fierce Rage, and a kind of Satanick Zeal.

The State of the World being like to that, when the holy *Psalmist* cried out, Psal. 94. 3, 4. *Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph? How long shall they utter and speak hard things, and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?* 52. 1. 10. 3.

Matt. 7. 6. In such a Case, is it not seasonable to observe our Lord's Advice, *not to give that which is holy unto dogs, nor to cast our pearls before swine*; not to expose good Doctrine, and holy Practice, to scurrilous and sensual People, who will snarl and bark at it, will scorn and trample on it, will bite and tear you for it?

Is



Is it not then Wisdom rather fairly to retreat, withdrawing our Vertue into a safe Retirement, than by openly contesting for it against over-matching Forces, to hazard its being baffled and abused, its being trampled on, and triumphed over, by scornful Pride and Malice?

In such a World, to oppose Impiety, what is it but attempting to stop a Torrent, to allay a Storm, to gape against an Oven, to blow against the Wind, to kick against the Pricks?

But if this Case be rightly weighed, it rather strongly may engage us to an open Profession and Practice of the strictest Vertue, than excuse us from it.

St. Paul doth enjoin us to walk accurately, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, for this reason, because the days are evil; and that we should be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Nation, shining among them as lights in the world; and \* holding forth the word of life. Eph. 5. 14. Phil. 2. 5.

And great Reason for it; for the worse the World is, the more need there is of good Patterns to instruct and guide it, to admonish and excite it to Goodness.

If the Days are evil, it is high time that we should apply our best Endeavours to the mending of them.

If Vertue be so near lost, or so quite gone from among us, it is needful that we should presently seek to recover, or to retrieve it. *Spem juvenis—in ea tempora natum es, quibus formare animum expediat constantibus exemplis. Tac. Ann. 16.*

If Goodness be so hardly pressed by Opposition, then hath every good Man the more Reason to appear strenuously in its defence, the more are we engaged to hasten with all our might to its Relief and Succour from irrecoverable Oppression.

Every one should labour to raise a Bank against that Inundation, which threatneth to overthrow and overwhelm all.

Shall we endure to see the Adversary of our Welfare to carry all before him, without any Opposition or Obstruction? Shall we suffer Iniquity to enjoy a quiet Reign, to root and settle its self in its Usurpation, to raise it self a Title of long Occupancy and Prescription against Goodness?

Is it not then more generous to avow our Friendship to Vertue, and to abet it in our Patronage, when it is under the Hatches, and crieth for our Aid? Is it not vile Treachery in such a Case to desert it?

Is it not gallant then to resist Sin, and check wickedness, when it is so high and rampant?

Who will not be Vertuous (or endeavour at least to appear such) when Vertue is in fashion and request; when it flourisheth in reputation, when all the World doth countenance and abet it? Who will not shun or disown wickedness when it is commonly odious and despicable? Who will not help the Lord against weak Adversaries? *Jud. 5. 23.*

But to embrace Vertue upon greatest Disadvantages, to disclaim Vice in its triumphant Prosperity, this is indeed brave and masculine.

He is a worthy Man indeed, who can keep the Field among so many stout Enemies, who can stand upright in a crooked generation; who can despise the Scorn, defy the Rage, bear up against the Impudence and Malignity of vain, base, wretched Men, combining to supplant and extirpate Goodness.

Nor have we Reason in proceeding thus to despair of good Success; we need not fear thereby to expose the Credit, or endanger the Interest of Goodness. For,

How can we fail of prospering in the maintenance of God's Cause, and special Concern? Although Men may commonly desert him, yet doth he not utterly forsake them, or give over the Government of the World; he may let the Reins lie a little loose, but he doth not put them out of his Hands; his Power cannot be abated, his Providence can never sleep; though he is so patient in suffering wicked Men to provoke him, yet he will not be slack in assisting good Men, who take his Part, and undertake to maintain his Honour; Assuredly he will help them, who help him against the mighty.

In this Service one will chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight; One David will knock down ever so many Philistines reproaching God's Name; One Phinehas will repress the Petulancy of a whole Nation; One Jeremy shall be a brazen Wall against a whole Land; God will make it good to such an one, They shall fight *Deut. 32. 30. Josh. 23. 10. Num. 25. 3.*



Jer. 1. 19. 15. fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee.  
20. 20. 11.

Jam. 4. 7.

Jer. 20. 11.

1 Pet. 2. 15.

3. 16.

Tit. 2. 8.

One sober Man, in defence of Vertue, is able to discomfit all the Hectors, the huffing Blades, and boisterous Ruffians in the World; attacking them with sound Discretion, and steady Resolution: For all their Bravery and Confidence, they are easily mated; and being like their Sire, if you resist them, they will flee from you: A prudent, seasonable, smart Check will quash their spurious Courage, and giddy Audacity. Their contempt of Goodness is but feigned; they cannot really for their Hearts despise it; there is stamped on their Souls and Consciences such a respect, such an awe thereof, which they cannot quite race out; wherefore if you briskly represent it to them, and challenge their Reverence to it, they cannot but succumb, their own Mind and Conscience joining to back your Reproof; so that if you cannot reclaim them, you shall however repress them; if you cannot correct their Vice, you shall yet confound their Impudence; For so (saith St. Peter) it is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the Ignorance of foolish Men; and, Having a good Conscience, that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your Conversation in Christ.

It is only a sneaking, or a timorous Pretence to Vertue, which they contemn, but they will admire those who stily adhere to it, and stoutly maintain it.

We shall therefore expose Vertue, not by frankly avowing it, but by faintly sinking from it, when Occasion requireth an open Acknowledgment and exemplary Practice of it.

If the World is so very bad, it will not be worse for our Attempt to better it; it will be so much at least better, that one therein hath that worthy Purpose.

It was bad, when Noah preached Righteousness to it.

It was bad, when Elias was so zealous for the Lord of Hosts.

It was bad, when Jeremy was derided for declaring God's Will, and exhorting to Repentance.

They were bad very times, when all the Prophets did strive so earnestly to reclaim Men from their Wickedness; being reproached and persecuted for doing so, but not deterred from doing it; the Resentment they had of the Badness of Times did not make them abandon the means of its Recovery from it.

1 John 5. 19.

The whole World did lie in wickedness, when the Apostles did undertake the Reformation of it.

None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth—  
Isa. 59. 4.

In fine, if Men generally upon such Accompts of despairing Prudence, neglect to own Goodness: What must the Consequence be? What, but that Piety shall be cashiered, that Vertue shall be discarded, that Conscience shall be quite exploded and exterminated from the World; that consequently an horrible Deluge of various Mischiefs, a general Prevalence of Leudness and Luxury, of Fraud and Violence, of Faction and Tumult; a Violation of all Faith and Friendship, a Dissolution of all Order and Peace will ensue?

Jer. 5. 29.

Isa. 1. 24.

59. 17.

And what must grow upon this State of Things? What but another Flood of of Judgments and woeful Vengeance; when God's Patience hath been tried to the utmost, and his Goodness tired with bearing such a Load of Abominations, he will be forced to cry out, Shall I not visit for these things? Shall not my Soul be avenged on such a Nation as this?

Stulta caliditas, perversitas, imitata prudentiam, Cic. de Offic. 3. p. 143.

10. Another Principle of dispensing with Conscience in publick Duties, and Conversation before Men, is a kind of perverse Wisdom, or subtile Craft, affecting the Name of Discretion.

Men see there are divers Inconveniences attending the Profession of Respect to God, and Conscience in all their Doings; that the World may dislike and disesteem them, that divers Persons will hate, malign, reproach and persecute them for it; that they may chance to be crossed in their Designs, and lose Profits and Preferments thereby; therefore they deem it adviseable to decline it in open view, making up the Defect by adoring and serving God in private.

Thus they think to salve all, by maintaining a neutrality, and compounding the Business, yielding an open Conformity to the World, and reserving a secret Regard to God; sinning publickly, and privately repenting; retaining their Credit, Quiet, Ease, Pleasure, with their Conscience, and Peace of Mind: Affecting some Piety, but avoiding the Scandal of it.

They



They would hold fair with both Sides, so that neither the World should persecute them for crossing its Humour, nor God punish them for transgressing his Will.

They drive a subtle Trade, hoping to gain on all hands, both the Benefits of the other, and the Advantages of this World; to save their Soul, and serve their Worldly Interest together.

Thus they would believe a Point of special Wisdom; prescribed by Solomon, *Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thy self over wise, for why shouldest thou destroy thy self? Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish, why shouldest thou die before the time?* Eccles. 7. 16; 17.

But this rooking Trick, to hedge thus, and save Stakes, to play fast and loose, to dodge and shuffle with God, God doth not like, nor will suffer himself to be gull'd with it.

He will not be satisfied with such a mungrel, partial, and halting Service. 1 Kings 18. 21.

He will not allow us to withhold that half of his Service (the external, visible Part thereof) which is most honourable to him, and most beneficial to our Neighbour.

He cannot endure a double Heart, a double Face; one looking upward to Heaven, another downward to the Earth.

He exacteth from us an Integrity of Heart, and Perfection of Obedience; that we should love him with our whole Heart, that we should be perfect with him, that we should walk uprightly, not *deflecting to the right hand or left* from our Duty.

Psal. 12. 2. Jam. 1. 8. 4. 8.  
2 Chron. 12. 33.  
1 Tim. 3. 8. *Ἀπὸ καρδίας*.  
Psal. 38. 37. *Their heart was not whole with him.* (Old Tr.)  
Deut. 18. 13. Job 1. 8.  
Psal. 44. 18. 119. 51.  
2 Chron. 34. 2. Job 23. 11.  
Matt. 6. 24. } *Ἄνθρωπος οὐκ ἔστιν δις*  
Luke 16. 13. }

He will not endure, that we should hold Amity, or Correspondence with his Enemies; particularly with the World, the Friendship whereof he hath declared inconsistent with his Favour; and that it is a spiritual Adultery to impart any of our Affections to it; according to that of St. James, *To Adulterers, and Adulteresses; know ye not that the friendship of the World is enmity with God; so that whosoever will be a Friend of the World, becometh the enemy of God?*

Jam. 4. 3. 1 John 2. 15.  
Kαὶ ὁ κόσμος ὁ ἐστὶν ἐχθρὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ.  
(John 15. 19. 17. 14.)

We may shift as well as we can in the World, provided that we hold Innocence, and do not conspire with it against God, by Violation of our Duty to him. *Be wise as Serpents, innocent as Doves*, Matt. 10. 16. (*As Lambs*, Luke 10. 3.)

Psal. 37. 38. (Old Tr.)  
Phil. 2. 5.

They reproach good Men as superstitious; who are afraid of invisible Powers; who let go Things in hand (present Interests and Pleasures) for a Reversion and Hope.

Rom. 16. 19. *Σοφὴς εἶναι τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἀποδοῦναι τὸ κακόν*.

As if God's Word were not sufficient Security: As if we may not as well rely upon Things conspicuous to Reason, as those which are obvious to Sense.

If Christianity be plainly false, they say well; but if it be true, very absurdly; yea, if probable, very imprudently; yea, if possible, not wisely. Ἀπορροῦν 2 Theff. 3. 21

They charge conscientious Men with timorousness, faint-heartedness.

It is timorousness or blameable Fear to dread Things without Reason, Things no wise formidable, which cannot hurt us; such a timorous Man is he, that out of Fear, of Men (of displeasing them, of suffering by them, of their Reproach, &c.) transgresseth his Duty.

But to fear God is Wisdom, Soberness, Duty, Vertue; 'tis handsome and honourable, becoming our Nature, our Condition; the Passion of Fear was chiefly put in us for this Purpose, as its best Use.

Is it Courage, and not rather Madness to provoke, to resist, to challenge, to cope with the Almighty? Is it Courage to throw ones self down a Precipice, to leap into the infernal Lake? Is it Gallantry to dare transgress all Reason and Sobriety? Is it brave to be wild and senseless, &c.?

It is true Courage to resist and repel Sin, assaulting a Man with whatever Advantages; to dare to do well, although vain Men deride, and spiteful Men hate us for it.

It is a kind of Martyrdom to be ill used by the World for adhering to his Duty; and he hath a share in that, *Blessed are they who suffer for righteousness.*



- Matt. 10. 39. In fine, it is a vain Prudence, to be thus politick with God; whereby we shall lose the whole, or that Part which is invaluable, out of Presumption to save a small inconsiderable Part.
- Gal. 5. 11. If this be Prudence, then (as St. Paul saith) *is the offence of the cross ceased.*
- Matt. 10. 38. Then our Lord prescribed a foolish Condition.
- Phil. 3. 8. Then were the Apostles very imprudent, who deserted all, and suffered so much for their Conscience; being content to secure their Spiritual Interest, and to obtain the eternal Rewards of Piety; *shunning the better part, which could not be taken from them.*
- Luke 10. 42. What the true Wisdom is in such Cases St. James hath told us, *Who is a wise Man, and endowed with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his Works, with meekness of Wisdom.*
- Jam. 3. 13.

## SERMON XXXVI.

### Of the Goodness of GOD.

#### PSALM CXLV. 9.

*The Lord is good to All, and his tender Mercies are over all his Works.*

**T**HE Goodness of God is a frequented Theme; to many perhaps it may seem vulgar and trite; so that Discourse thereon, like a Story often told, may be nauseous to their Ears: but in truth neither can we speak too much upon this most excellent Subject, nor ought we ever to be weary in hearing about it; for 'tis a Sign that the Palate of our Mind is distempered, if we do not with Delight and Affection relish any mention of Divine Goodness. Yea, the Observation of Mens common Practice would induce us to think, that either this Point is not so well known, or but little believed, or at least not well considered and applied. For how could we be so void of Love to God, of Gratitude toward Him, of Faith and Hope in Him, were we thoroughly persuaded, did we seriously consider, that He is so exceedingly Good toward us? How can we be so insensible of the Benefits we enjoy, so distrustful of finding Succours and Supplies in our Need, so dissatisfied and discontented with what befalls us, if we conceive and weigh, that all things do proceed from, are guided and governed by immense Goodness? How also, if Men have such an Opinion of God impressed on their Minds, comes it to pass that they are so little Careful to resemble and imitate him in Kindness, Bounty, and Mercy to one another? How is it in fine, that the most powerful Argument to all manner of good Practice, and the mightiest Aggravation of Sin, if well known and pondered, hath so little Force and Efficacy upon us? From Experi-

— *Θεός, ὁ πολλὰν ὀλίγον, ἐφ' οἷς δαυ-  
μαίει, ἔδεν ἕως ὅς τὸ πάλαις ἐνε-  
ργεῖν ἰδιωτάλον. Naz. Orat. 26.*

ence therefore this Argument may seem scarce sufficiently inculcated. We may add, that Discourse upon this Attribute (which above all other Attributes doth render God peculiarly admirable, and amiable) hath this special Advantage beyond other Discourses, that it doth, if our Hearts conspire therewith, approach most nearly to the formal Exercise of the most high and heavenly Parts of Devotion, Praise and Thanksgiving; that it more immediately conduces to the breeding, the nourishing, the augmenting in us the best and noblest of pious Affections, Love and Reverence to God; Trust and Hope in him; willing Resolutions to please and serve him; whence it is consequent, that we cannot too much employ our Thoughts, our Words, or our Attention upon this Point. Besides so much Reason, we have

also



also good Example to countenance us in so doing: We have the Precedent of the holy Psalmist resolving to make it his constant and continual Employment: *I will sing* (saith he) *of the Mercies of the Lord; with my mouth will I make known thy Faithfulness to all Generations.* And, *Every day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy Name for ever;* (that blessing and praising God, the Context shews to have consisted especially in the Declaration of God's great Goodness) and, *It is a good thing* (saith he again) *to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy Name, O thou most High; to shew forth thy loving kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night.* Such were his Intentions, and such his Judgment about this Practice; and we find him in effect true and answerable to them; Every Song of his, every Meditation, every exercise of Devotion chiefly harping upon this String; and he earnestly wishes that others would consent and consort with him therein; he earnestly exhorts and excites them thereto: *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men. Praise the Lord, O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.* That one Example might sufficiently Authorize this Practice; but we have innumerable others, and those the highest that can be, to encourage and engage us thereto; even the whole Choir of Heaven, whose perpetual Business and happy Entertainment it is to contemplate with their Minds, to celebrate with their Voices the immense Goodness of God; *They have* (as it is in the Revelation) *no rest day or night from performing this office.* Such is the Subject of our Discourse; the which our Text most plainly and fully expresses; asserting not only the Goodness of God; but the universal and boundless Extent thereof: *The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies* (or *his bowels of affection and pity*) *are over all his works.* And that God indeed is such, we shall first endeavour to declare, then shall briefly apply the Consideration thereof to Practice.

That God the Lord, and Maker of all things is of himself, in regard to all his Creatures, especially to us Men, superlatively good, that is, disposed never without just or necessary Cause to harm us, and inclinable to do us all possible and befitting good, the universal Frame of Nature, and the constant Course of Providence do afford us sufficient reason to conceive, and most frequent, most express Testimonies of holy Scripture do more fully demonstrate. There is no Argument from natural Effects discernible by us, which proveth God's Existence, (and innumerable such there are, every sort of things well studied may afford some) the which doth not together persuade God to be very kind and benign; careful to impart to us all befitting Good, suitable to our natural Capacity and Condition; and unwilling that any considerable Harm, any extreme Want or Pain should befall us. (I interpose such Limitations, for that an absolute, or universal and perpetual exemption from all kinds, or all degrees of Inconvenience, an Accumulation of all sorts of appearing good upon us, doth not become, or suit our natural State of Being, or our Rank in Perfection among Creatures; neither all things being duly stated, and computed, will it turn to best account for us.) The best (no less convincing than obvious) Arguments, asserting the Existence of a Deity, are deduced from the manifold and manifest Footsteps of admirable Wisdom, Skill and Design apparent in the general Order, and in the particular Frame of Creatures; the beautiful Harmony of the whole, and the artificial Contrivance of each Part of the World; the which 'tis hardly possible that any unprejudiced and undistempered Mind should conceive to proceed from blind Chance, or as blind Necessity. But with this Wisdom are always complicated no less evident Marks of Goodness. We cannot in all that vast Bulk of the Creation, and numberless Variety of things discover any Piece of meer Pomp or dry Curiosity; every thing seems to have some beneficial Tendency; according to which it confers somewhat to the need, convenience, or comfort of those principal Creatures, which are endued with Sense and Capacity to enjoy them. Most of them have a palpable Relation to the Benefit (to the Subsistence or Delight) of living Creatures; and especially in an ultimate Relation to the Benefit of Man; and the rest, although their immediate Use be not to our dim sight so discernible, may therefore be reasonably presumed in their natural designation to regard the same End. Wherefore as upon Consideration of that ample Provision, which is made in Nature for the necessary Sustenance, Defence, and Relief, for the Convenience, Delight, and Satisfaction of every Creature, any Man, who is not careless or stupid, may be induced to



*Pfal. 104. 24.* cry out with the *Psalmist*: O Lord, how manifold are thy Works, in wisdom hast thou made them all? So may he with no less reason and ground after him pronounce and acknowledge; *The Earth is full of the goodness of the Lord: The Earth, O Lord, is full of thy Mercy. Thy Mercy is great unto the Heavens; thy Mercy is great above the Heavens.* 'Tis indeed because Divine Goodness is freely diffusive and communicative of it self; because essential Love is active, and fruitful in beneficence; because highest Excellency is void of all Envy, Selfishness, and Tenacity, that the World was produced such as it was; those Perfections being intrinsecal to God's Nature, disposed him to bestow so much of Being, of Beauty, of Pleasure upon his Creatures. *He openeth his hand, they are filled with good:* 'Tis from God's open Hand, his unconfined Bounty and Liberality, that all Creatures do receive all that good which fills them, which satisfies their Needs, and satiates their Desires. Every pleasant Object we view, every sweet and savoury Morsel we taste, every Fragrancy we smell, every Harmony we hear; the wholesome, the chearing, the useful; yea, the innocent and inoffensive Qualities of every thing we do use and enjoy, are so many perspicuous Arguments of Divine Goodness; we may not only by our Reason collect it, but we even touch and feel it with all our Senses.

The like Conclusion may be infer'd from the Observation of Divine Providence. Every Signification, or Experiment, whence we may reasonably infer that Divine Power and Wisdom do concur in upholding, managing, and directing the general State of Things, or the particular Affairs of Men, being well examined and weighed, would afford Reason apt to persuade, that the Governour of the World is graciously affected toward his Creatures and Subjects. The general Preservation of Things in their natural Constitution and Order; the dispensing constant Vicissitudes of Season, so as may serve for the Supply of our Needs; the maintaining such a Course of Things in the World, that notwithstanding the great irregularity of Will, and violence of Passion in so many Persons; yet Men do ordinarily shift so as to live tolerably upon Earth in Peace and Safety, and enjoyment of competent Accommodations for Life; with the Aids and Consolations arising from mutual Society; the Supports, Encouragement, and Rewards of Vertue many times in a strange Manner administred; the Restraints, Disappointments, and seasonable Chastisements of Wickedness, especially when it grows exorbitant and outrageous, unexpectedly intervening, with the like Passages of Providence, will, to him that shall regard the works of the Lord, and the operation of his hands, sufficiently declare as the other glorious Attributes (Wisdom, Power, and Justice) so especially the Goodness of him, who presides over the World; assuring that he is a Friend to the Welfare, and dislikes the Misery of Mankind. He that shall well observe, and consider how among so many fierce and hard-hearted, so many crafty and spiteful, so many domineering and devouring Spirits, the poor and weak, the simple and harmless sort of People do however subsist, and enjoy somewhat, cannot but suspect that an undiscernible Hand, full of Pity and Bounty, doth often convey the necessary supports of Life to them, doth often divert imminent Mischief from them; cannot but acknowledge it credible, what the holy Scripture teacheth, that God is the Friend, and Patron, and Protector of those needy and helpless People, *redeeming their Soul from deceit and violence,* (as the *Psalmist* speaks) that he is (as the *Prophet* expresseth it) *a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the Wall.* He that shall remark, how frequently in an unaccountable way, succour and relief do spring up to just and innocent Persons; so that in a whole Age (as the *Psalmist* observed) such Persons do not appear destitute or forsaken; how also Iniquity is commonly stop'd in his full career, and then easily receives a check, when its violence seem'd uncontrollable; how likewise many times the World is rescued from Confusions and Distractions unextricable by any visible Wit or Force; with other like Occurrences in human Affairs, must admit it for a reasonable Hypothesis (fit to render a Cause of such Appearances) that a transcendent Goodness doth secretly interpose, furthering the Production of such Effects; he must upon such Observation be ready to verify that of the *Psalmist*: *Verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily there is a God that judgeth the Earth.* St. Paul instructs us, that in past-times, (that is, in all Generations from the Beginning of Things) God did attest himself to be the Governour of the World: How? ἀγαθοποιῶν, by his Beneficence; giving to Men showers from Heaven,



Heaven, and fruitful Seasons, filling their Hearts with food and gladness: Competent Evidences it seems these were of his Providence, and withall (supposing that) certain Demonstrations of his Goodness: Although some have abused this kind of Testimony, or Argumentation so valid in its self, unto a contrary Purpose alledging, that if God ruled the World, so much Wickedness and Impiety would not be tolerated therein, that ingrateful and evil Men could not so thrive and flourish; that more speedy and more severe Vengeance would be executed; that Benefits would not be scattered among the Crowd of Men, with so promiscuous and undistinguishing a Freeness: But such Discourses, upon a just and true Account, do only infer the great Patience and Clemency, the unconfined Mercy and Bounty of our Lord; that he is in Disposition very different from pettish and impatient Man, who, should he have the Reins put into his Hands, and in his Administration of Things should be so often neglected, crossed, abused, would soon over-turn all Things; and being himself discomposed with Passion, would precipitate the World into Confusion and Ruin. Things would not have subsisted hitherto, and continued in their orderly Course, but by the Moderation of an immense Goodness; by that

— *magni custos clementia mundi.*

Claud.

'Tis by the Lord's Mercies that we (we the whole Body of sinful Men, so guilty of heinous Provocations, and Rebellions against our Maker) are not consumed. And what again God in the Prophet speaks concerning Israel, he might have applied to the whole Nation of Men: *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim; how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? I will not execute the fierceness of my Anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not Man: The Reason (for I am God, and not Man) is observable; implying (upon parity of Reason in the Cases, concerning that one Nation, and concerning the Body of Men) that it is an Indulgence, and forbearance above, if not contrary to the Temper of Man, and even beyond human Conceit, whereby the State of Things here doth subsist, and is preserved from Ruin.*

Thus Nature, and thus Providence do bear witness concerning the Disposition of God. As for Scripture, there is nothing either in way of positive Assertion more frequently inculcated, or by more illustrious Examples set forth and made palpable, than this Attribute of God. When God would impart a Portraiture, or Description of himself to his dearest Friend, and Favourite Moses; the first and chief Lineaments thereof are several Sorts, or several Instances of Goodness; he expresses himself *Merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness*: (*Merciful: El rachum*;) a God of pitying, or strong in Pity; that is, most apt to commiserate and to succour those who are in Need or Distress. *Gracious*, that is, ready both freely to forgive Wrongs, and to dispense Favours. *Long-suffering*, or *longus irarum*, that is, not soon moved, or apt easily to conceive Displeasure; not hasty in execution of Vengeance, or venting his Anger in hurtful Effects. *Abundant in goodness*, that is, not sparing as to Quantity or Quality, either in the Multitude or Magnitude of his Favours, but in all respects exceedingly liberal; conferring willingly both very many, and very great Benefits. Such did God represent himself to Moses, when he desired a fuller Knowledge, and nearer Acquaintance with him, than ordinary Means afford. The same Character in Substance we have often repeated; and sometimes with Advantage of emphatical Expression, well deserving our Observation and Regard; as when the Prophet Joel saith, that God is *penitent, or sorry for evil inflicted*; and Micah, that he *delighteth in Mercy*; and when Nehemiah calleth him a *God of Pardons*; and when Isaiah represents him as *waiting* (or seeking Occasions) *to be gracious*: And all this in the Old Testament, where God seems to look upon Man with a less serene, and debonaire Aspect: Indeed as that Dispensation (suitably to the Nature and Condition of Things under it) doth set out God's Mercy and Goodness with especial Relation to this present World, or temporal Estate; so the New one more abundantly displays his more excellent care and love of our Souls; his great tenderness of our spiritual and eternal Welfare. It is all of it in its Nature and Design but as it were one entire Declaration of the *τὸ χρηστὸν τῷ θεῷ* (the beneficial Disposition, the Benignity, or Bountifulness of God, as St. Paul telleth us) 'tis a rare Project of divine Philanthropy; an illustrious Affidavit of God's wonderful Propensity to bless and save Mankind; manifested



nifested by the highest Expressions and Instances of Love and Goodness that were possible. (For his not sparing his own Son, *the express Image of his Substance*, the dearest Object of his infinite Love, the Partaker of his eternal Nature and Glory, but delivering him up a Sacrifice for our Offences; his most earnest woeing our Baseness and Unworthiness to Reconciliation with him, and Admission or Acceptance of his Favour; his tendering upon so fair and easy Terms an endless Life in perfect Joy and Bliss; his furnishing us with so plentiful Means and powerful Aids for attaining that happy State; how pregnant Demonstrations are these, of unspeakable Goodness toward us, whence, The ordinary Titles in this Dispensation attributed unto him, are, *the God of love and peace, of hope, of patience; of all grace of all Consolation; the Father of Pities, rich in Mercy, full of Bowels; Love and Goodness it self.* Thus doth the Scripture positively assert God's Goodness; thus it directly represents and describes his gracious Disposition toward us. And as for Examples (which must serve as to illustrate and explain, so also to verify, and assure Matters of this Nature) if we carefully attend to God's ordinary Proceedings with Men there recorded, we shall find this Disposition very conspicuous in them. Who can recount the Number, or set out the Value of those Instances wherein God's Goodness is expressed toward such as lov'd him? Of his admirable Condescension in drawing them to him; of the affectionate Tenderness, with which he constantly embraced them; of his merciful Indulgence toward them, when provoked by their untowardly Behaviour; of his kind Acceptance, and munificent recompensing their Endeavours to please him; of his deep compassionating their Sufferings; of his vigilant Carefulness over them, and over all their Concernments? Methinks the highest Expressions that Language, assisted with all its Helps of Metaphor and Resemblance can afford, are very languid and faint in Comparison of what they strain to represent, when the Goodness of God toward them who love him, comes to be expressed: *As the Heaven is high above the Earth, so great is his Mercy toward them that fear him. Like as a Father pitieth his Children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him;* So David strives to utter it, but with Similitudes far short of the Truth. If any will come near to reach it, 'tis that in Moses and Zachary, when they are compared to the *Apple of God's Eye*, that is, to the most dear and tender Part, as it were, about him. We find them often stiled, and ever treated as Friends, and as Children; and that in a Sense transcending the vulgar Signification of those Words; for, what Friendship could endure, could pass over, could forget, could admit an entire Reconciliation, and Re-establishment in Affection after such heinous Indignities, such Infidelities, such Undutifulness as were those of Adam, of Noah, of David, of Peter: Who would have received into Favour and Familiarity a Manasse, a Magdalen, a Paul? Who would so far extend his Regard upon the Posterity (upon such a Posterity, so untoward, so unworthy) of his Friend, as God did upon that of Abraham, in respect unto him? What great Prince would employ his principal Courtiers to guard and serve a poor Attendant, a mean Subject of his? Yet; *The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them;* And many Instances we have of those glorious Inhabitants of Heaven by God's Appointment stooping down to wait upon, and to perform Service to the Sons of Men. But upon Examples of this Nature, being numberless, and composing indeed the main Body of the *Sacred History* (it being chiefly designed to represent them) I shall not insist; I shall only observe for preventing or satisfying Objections (yea indeed for turning them to the Advantage and Confirmation of that which we assert) that even in those Cases, wherein God's highest Severity hath been exercised, when God hath purposed to exhibit most dreadful Instances of his Justice upon the most provocative Occasions; we may discern his Goodness eminently shewing it self: That even in the greatest Extremity of his Displeasure, in his Acts of highest Vengeance, Mercy doth *κατακλυζαὶ καὶ κλέσσει* (as St. James speaketh) *boast it it self, and triumph over Justice*: That God, as the Sun (to use Tertullian's Similitude) when he seems most to infest and scorch us, doth even then dispense useful and healthful Influences upon us. Even I say in the most terrible and amazing Exam-

Rom. 5. 33.  
13. 5.  
2 Cor. 13. 11.  
1. 3.  
Eph. 2. 4.  
Jam. 5. 11.  
1 John 4. 8.

Luke 6. 35.  
For he is kind  
unto the un-  
thankful, and  
to the evil.

Psal. 36. 6.  
Psal. 103. 11.  
13.

Deut. 32. 10.  
Zach. 2. 8.  
John 15. 14.  
2 Chron. 20. 7.

Psal. 34. 7.

Γίνετο φιλανθρωπία ἢ τιμωρία. ἔτα-  
ξεν ἡμεῖς περὶ τοῦ καλῶς εἶναι τοῦ  
ὁριζ. 38.  
Ἐγὼ τοσαύτῳ σεμνότητι εἶναι φημι ὅτι  
τῷ θεῷ καὶ δεινότητι, ὡς μὴ μόνον ἀπὸ  
ἐτίμωσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπὸ ἐνέκλασιν ὁμοί-  
ως ἡμᾶς δύνανται καὶ ἀγαθότητα αὐτῷ  
δεικνύναι, καὶ τὴν φιλανθρωπίαν. Chrys.  
ἀνδρ. 5.

Ὁ θεὸς ἀπαθὴς ἐν καὶ ἐν ἐκείνῃ, καὶ  
καλῶς, ὁμοίως ἐστὶν ἀγαθός. Ibid.

Jam. 2. 13.

Tunc maxime est optimus, cum tibi  
non bonus; sicut Sol tibi etiam quando  
non putat, optimus & utilis, &c. Ter-  
tull. in Marc. II. 2.



Examples of Divine Justice (such as were the ejecting and excluding Mankind from Paradise; the general Destruction in the Deluge; the extirpating and extirpation of the *Amorites* together with other Inhabitants of *Canaan*; the delivering *Israel* and *Judah* into the *Assyrian* Thralldom, the final Destruction of *Jerusalem*, together with the Dispersion of the *Jewish* Nation over the World, and its sad Consequences) we may (not hardly) observe Particulars, more than favouring of great Mercy and Goodness.

1. That (in most of these Cases, in all according to some Account) God was not moved to the Displeasure productive of those Effects but upon very great Considerations. That he did not seek Advantages, nor embrace all Occasions; but was incensed by superlative Degrees of Iniquity and Impurity (such in their own Nature, and much aggravated by their Circumstances) such as rendered common Life inconvenient and insupportable to Men; made the Earth to stink with their Filth and Corruption; to groan under the Burthen and Weight of them; to pant and labour for a Riddance from them.

2. That God did not upon the first Glimpses of Provocation proceed to the Execution and Discharge of his Wrath, but did with wonderful Patience expect a Change in the Offenders, *waiting to be gracious*, as the Prophet speaketh; affording more than competent Time, and Means more than sufficient of appeasing him by Repentance; vouchsafing frequent Admonitions, Solicitations, Threatnings, moderate Corrections, and other such proper Methods conducing to their Amendment, and to their Preservation.

3. That their Infections themselves, how grievous soever in appearance, were not really extreme in Measure; not accompanied with so acute Torments, nor with so lingering Pains, nor with so utter a Ruin as might have been inflicted; but that (as *Ezra*, in respect to one of those Cases, confesseth) they were *less than their Iniquities deserved*. That (as it is in the *Psalms*) *He did not stir up all his Wrath*; which would have immediately consumed them, or infinitely tormented them.

4. That (consequently upon some of those Premises) the Afflictions brought upon them were in a Sort rather necessary than voluntary in respect of him; rather a natural Fruit of their Dispositions and Dealings, than a free Result of his Will; however contrary to his primary Intentions and Desires. Whence he no less truly, than earnestly disclaims having any Pleasure in their Death, that he *afflicted willingly, or grieved the Children of Men*; and charged their Disasters upon themselves, as the sole Causes of them.

5. That farther, the Chastisements inflicted were wholesome and profitable, both in their own Nature, and according to his Design; both in respect to the generality of Men (who by them were warned, and by such Examples deterred from incurring the like Mischief; were kept from the Inconveniences, secured from the Temptations, the Violences, the Allurements, the Contagions of the present evil State; according to that Reason alledged for Punishments of this kind: (*All the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously*) and in regard to the Sufferers themselves, who thereby were prevented from proceeding farther in their wicked Courses; accumulating (or, *treasuring up*, as the *Apostle* speaketh) farther Degrees of Wrath, as obdurate and incorrigible People will surely do: (*Why, saith the Prophet, should ye be stricken any more? (to what Purpose is moderate Correction?) Ye will revolt more and more.*) That he did with a kind of Violence to his own Inclinations, and Reluctancy inflict Punishments on them. *O Ephraim, how shall I give thee up, O Ephraim.* Yea farther.

6. That during their Sufferance, God did bear Compassion toward them who underwent it. *His Bowels*, as we are told, *foamed and were troubled*; his Heart was turned within him; his Repentings were kindled together; in all their Afflictions himself was afflicted; he remembered and considered they were but Dust; that they were but Flesh (that they were but of a weak and frail Temper; that they were naturally prone to Corruption and Evil) and did therefore pity their Infirmary, and their Misery.

7. That God in his Wrath remembered Mercy (as the Prophet *Habakkuk* speaks) mixing gracious Intentions of future Refreshment and Reparation with the present

Vide Chrys.  
Tom. 6. Or. 9.  
p. 63. optime.

Ez. 9. 13.  
Psal. 78. 44.

Ezek. 18. 23.  
32. 33. 11.  
Lam. 3. 33.  
Hos. 13. 9.

Chrys. 'Ανδρ. ζ'.  
Ὅμοιόν ἐστι δικαστὴς ὁ Θεὸς καὶ ὁ δίδουσκαλός  
ἐστι δὲ Θεός. Ibid.  
Deut. 17. 13.  
Ἐπιτίθεισι τιμωρίας, ἢ τῶν ἀπειθήσων  
ἀπαυτῶν δίκην, ἀλλὰ τὰ μέγιστα διορθώ-  
μεθα. Chrys. Tom. 8. p. 99.

Rom. 2. 5.  
Isa. 1. 5. 26. 10.

Hos. 6. 4.

Isa. 63. 9. 15.  
Hos. 11. 8.  
Jer. 31. 20.  
Gen. 6. 3.  
8. 21.  
Psal. 103. 14.  
78. 39.

Hab. 3. 2.



Gen. 6. 3. sent Executions of Justice. *I know (saith he in the Prophet Jeremy) the Thoughts*  
 8. 21. *that I think toward you; Thoughts of Peace, and not of Evil, to give you an expected*  
 Jer. 29. 11. *End. Behold, I will bring Health and Cure, I will cure them, and will reveal unto them*  
 33. 6. *abundance of Peace and Truth. And, For a small Moment (saith he again in Esay)*  
 Isa. 54. 7. *have I forsaken thee, but with great Mercies will I gather thee. And, Ye shall be com-*  
 Ezek. 14. 21. *forted concerning the Evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem—and ye shall know, that*  
*I have not done without cause all that I have done in it; saith the Lord (he saith so*  
*in Ezekiel) without cause, that is, without a beneficial Design toward them.*

8. Lastly, That he always signified a readiness to turn from his Anger, and to  
 forgive them; and upon very equal and easy Terms to be fully reconciled to them;  
 Psal. 103. 9. *according to that in the Psalmist, He doth not always chide, neither will he keep his*  
*Anger for ever; but upon any reasonable Overtures of Humiliation, Confession*  
 and Conversion to him, was ready to abate, yea, to remove the Effects of his Dis-  
 Psal. 99. 8. *pleasure; Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest Vengeance of their*  
*Inventions.*

These Particulars, if we attentively survey those dreadful Examples of Divine  
 Severity forementioned (the greatest which History acquaints us with, or which  
 have been shewed on this Theatre of Human Affairs) we may observe most of  
 them in all, all of them in some, either plainly expressed, or sufficiently insi-  
 nuated by the Circumstances observable in the Historical Narrations concerning  
 them; so that even the hardest Instances of God's wrathful Dealing with some  
 Men, may well serve to the Illustration of his Mercy and Goodness toward all  
 Men; may evince it true, what our Lord affirms, that God is, *χρηστός ἐν ἀγα-*  
 Luke 6. 35. *θίᾳ, καὶ ἐλεητικός, kind and beneficent even to the most ingrateful and unworthy Persons.*  
 To make which Observation good, and consequently to assert the Verity of our  
 Text (That God is good unto all, and merciful over all his Works) against the most  
 plausible Exceptions; I shall examine the Particulars in the following Discourse.

## SERMON XXXVII.

### Of the Goodness of GOD.

#### PSALM CXLV. 9.

*The Lord is good to All, and his tender Mercies are over all his Works.*

I Shall now more particularly consider the several Instances beforementioned.

I. The Punishment inflicted on Mankind for the first Transgression con-  
 taineth in it much of Depth and Mystery, surpassing perhaps all Capacity of Man  
 to reach; its full Comprehension being by Divine Wisdom (I conceive) pur-  
 posely concealed from us; so that I cannot pretend thoroughly to explain it; and  
 shall not therefore speak much about it.

This indeed is clear, that God did in his Proceedings occasion'd thereby, intend  
 remarkably to evidence his grievous Resentment and Indignation against wilful  
 Disobedience; yet in the Management thereof we may observe; that,

*Vid. Chrys. 'Ανδρ. ζ'.  
 Οὐ γὰρ ἔπει, καὶ ἀποπέφειν ἐν ὑπερομένῳ  
 ἐπείν, ὃ μαρτυρεῖ παμμίαν, &c. Ibid.*

1. After that Provocation (in it self so high, and liable to  
 so great Aggravations) God did express his Resentment in so  
 calm and gentle a Manner, that Adam, though abashed upon  
 the Conscience of his Fault, was not yet by the Vehemency  
 of the Reproof utterly dismayed or dejected.

2. God



2. God used great Moderation in the Infliction of this Punishment; mitigating the Extremity of the Sentence justly decreed and plainly declared to *Adam* (that in case of his offending against the Law prescribed him, he should immediately die) for notwithstanding his Forfeiture that very Day of Life, God reprieved him, and allowed him a long Life, almost of a Thousand Years after.

3. God did not quite reject Man thereupon, nor did withdraw his Fatherly Care and Providence from him, but openly continued them; insomuch that immediately after the Curse pronounced upon our first Parents, the next Passage we meet with is, that unto *Adam* and his *Wife* did the Lord God make Coats, and cloathed them.

4. Although indeed Man was by his Fault a great Loser, and became deprived of high Advantages; yet the Mercy of God did leave him in no very deplorable Estate, simply considered, as to his Life here; the Relicks of his first Estate, and the Benefits continued to him being very considerable; so that we the Inheritors of that great Disaster do commonly find the Enjoyment of Life, with the Conveniencies attending it, to be sweet and desirable.

5. The Event manifests, that while God in appearance so severely punished Mankind, he did in his Mind reserve Thoughts of highest Kindness toward us; even then designing not only to restore us to our former Degree, but to raise us to a Capacity of obtaining a far more high Pitch of Happiness. While he excluded us from a Terrestrial Paradise here, he provided a far better Celestial one, into which, if we please, by Obedience to his Holy Laws we may certainly enter. So that in this of all most heavy Instance of Vengeance, God's exceeding Goodness and Clemency do upon several Considerations most clearly shine.

II. The Calamity, which by the general Deluge did overflow the World, was not (we may consider) brought upon Men but in regard to the most enormous Offences long continued in, and after Amendment was become desperate. Not till after much forbearance, and till Men were grown to a superlative Pitch of Wickedness by no fit means (by no friendly Warning, no sharp Reprehension, no moderate Chastisement) corrigible. Not until the Earth was become (especially for Persons of any Innocence or Integrity) no tolerable Habitation, but a Theatre of lamentable Tragedies, a Seat of horrid Iniquity, a Sink of loathsome Impurity. So that in Reason it was to be esteemed rather a Favour to Mankind to rescue it from so unhappy a State, than to suffer it to persist therein. To snatch Men away out of so uncomfortable a Place, from so wretched a Condition, was a Mercy; it had been a Judgment to have left them annoying, rising and harassing; biting, tearing and devouring; yea defiling and debauching each other; and so heaping upon themselves Loads of Guilt, and deeper Obligations to Vengeance. *The Earth (saith the Text) was corrupt before God; and the Earth was filled with Violence. God looked upon the Earth, and behold it was corrupt; for all Flesh had corrupted its way upon the Earth;* which universal and extreme Corruption had not in probability sprung up in a small time (for,

*Nemo repente fuit turpissimus,* ———

is true not only of single Men, but of Communities; no People, no Age, doth suddenly degenerate into extreme Degrees of Wickedness) so that the Divine Patience had long endured and attended upon Men, before the Resolution of thus punishing them was taken up; the which also was not at first peremptory and irreversible, but in God's Design and Desire it was revocable; for the World had a long Reprieve after the Sentence pass'd; Execution was deferr'd till *Noah's* long preaching of Righteousness, and denouncing of Judgment in a manner so notorious and signal (not by verbal Declarations only, but by the visible Structure of the Ark) could prevail nothing toward their Amendment, but was either distrusted or disregarded, and perhaps derided by them. For, as *St. Peter* tells us, *They were disobedient, when once the Long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the Ark was preparing;* that is (as is collected by several Interpreters from the \* Text of the Story) during no less than 120 Years; a competent time for their recollecting themselves, and endeavouring by amendment of Life to prevent the Ruin threatened to come upon them. Yet notwithstanding that, this obstinate and incorrigible



Gen. 6. 6. corrigible Disobedience did so much displease God, as that in Consideration thereof God is said to have *repented that he made Man on the Earth*, and to have been thereby grieved at the Heart: Yet did he so temper his Anger as not utterly to destroy Mankind, but provided against its total ruin, by preserving one Family as a Seminary thereof; preserving the Father thereof (questionless by a special Grace) from the spreading Contagion, inspiring him with Faith, and qualifying him for the Favour, which by him he designed to communicate unto the World; the reparation thereof, and restoring the Generations of Men. So that also through this Passage of Providence, how dismal and dreadful soever at first sight, much Goodness will be transparent to him that looks upon it attentively.

Levit. 18. III. In the next Place, as to that Extermination and Excision of the *Canaanites*, which carries so horrible an appearance of Severity, we may find it qualifiable, if we consider, that for the nature of the Trespases, which procured it, they were insufferably heinous and abominable: Most sottish, barbarous, and base Superstitions (Cruelty and Impurity being essential Ingredients into their Performances of Religion, and it being Piety with them to be exceedingly wicked) and in their other Practice most beastly Lasciviousnesses, most bloody Violences, Oppressions and Rapines generally abounding. So that for those Men themselves, who were by turns, as it happened, the Authors and the Objects of these Dealings, it could not be desirable to continue in a State of living so wretched and uncomfortable. Impunity had been no Mercy to such People, but rather a Cruelty; cutting them off must needs be the greatest Favour they were capable of; it being only removing them from a Hell here, and preventing their deserving many worse Hells hereafter. Even to themselves it was a Favour and a greater one to their Posterity, whom they might have brought forth to succeed in their Courses, and to the Consequences of them; whom they would have engaged into their wicked Customs, and their woful Mischiefs. They were not so destroyed from the Land, until it grew uninhabitable in any tolerable manner, and it self could not, as it were, endure them any longer, but (as the Text doth most significantly express  
Levit. 18. 28. it) *did spue them out*; being like a Stomach surcharg'd with foul, or poisonous Matter, which it loaths, and is pained with, and therefore naturally labours to expel. Neither was this sad Doom executed upon them till after 400 Years of Forbearance: For even in *Abraham's* Time God took notice of their Iniquity, then born and growing; and gave Account of his suspending their Punishment; *because*  
Gen. 15. 16. (said he) *the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full* (that is, was not yet arrived to a pitch of desperate Obstinacy and Incurability:.) While there was the least glimpse of Hope, the least Relicks of any Reason, any Regret, any Shame in them, the least possibility of Recovery, God stopped his avenging Hand; but when all ground of hope was removed; the whole Stock of natural Light and Strength was imbezzled; all Fear, all Remorse, all Modesty were quite banished away; all Means of Cure had proved ineffectual; the Gangrene of Vice had seized on every Part, Iniquity was grown mature and mellow; then was the Stroke of Justice indeed not more seasonable than necessary; then was the fatal Sword the only proper Remedy; then so with one Stroke to cut off them, and their Sins and their Mischiefs, and their Miseries together, was an Argument no less strong and clear of God's merciful Goodness, than of his just Anger toward them.

Hof. 9. 9. IV. The like Account we may render of God's Judgments upon the People of *Israel*. If we consult the *Prophets*, who declare the State of Things, the Facts, the Dispositions, the Guilts, that brought them down from Heaven, we shall see, that they came upon Account of an universal Apostasy from both the Faith and Practice of true Religion; a deep corruption (like that in the days of *Gibeah*, as the Prophet *Hosea* speaketh) in Mind and Manners; an utter perverting of all Truth and Right; an obstinate Compliance with, or Emulation of the most abominable Practices of the Heathen Nations about them; an Universal Apostasy, I say, from God and all Goodness; a thorough Prevalence of all Iniquity. Hear the *Prophets* expressing it, and describing them. *Jeremy*; *Run ye to and fro through the Streets of Hierusalem; see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof; if ye can find a Man; if there be any that executeth Judgment, that seeketh the Truth, and I will*  
pardon



pardon it. *Esay*; The Earth is defiled under the Inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the Laws, changed the Ordinances, broken the everlasting Covenant: *Ab* sinful Nation! a People laden with Iniquities, a Seed of evil Doers; Children that are Corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto Anger; they are gone away backward, &c. Thus do these and other Prophets in a like Strain describe in the Gross the State of Things preceding those Judgments. And in *Ezekiel* (in divers Places, particularly in the 8th, but especially in the 22d, Chapter) we have their Offences in Retail, and by Parts (their gross Impieties, their grievous Cruelties, Extortions and Oppressions) set out copiously, and in most lively Colours. And as the Quality of their Provocations was so bad, and the Extension of them so large, so was their Condition desperate; there were no means of Remedy left, no hopes of Amendment; so was their Forehead covered with Impudence, their Heart hardened with Obstinacy, their Minds deeply tinctured with habitual Pravity and Perverseness: Can the Ethiopian change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots, then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil, saith *Jeremy* concerning them. All Methods of reclaiming them had proved fruitless; no favourable Dealings, no gentle Admonition, or kind Instruction would avail any thing; for 'tis of them the Prophet *Esay* saith; Let Favour be shewed to the Wicked, yet will he not learn Righteousness. No Advices, no Reproofs (how frequent, how vehement, how urgent soever) had any Effect upon them. Almighty God declares often that he had spoken unto them rising up early, but they would not hear nor regard his Speech; did not only neglect, and refuse, but despise, loath, mock, and reproach it (turning their Back upon him, pulling away their Shoulder, stiffning their Neck, and stopping their Ears, that they should not hear) that he had spread out his Hands all the day long to a rebellious and gainsaying People; to a People that (with extreme Insolence and Immodesty) provoked him to Anger continually to his Face. Nor could any Tenders of Mercy allure or move them: I said (God said it in *Jeremy*) after all these things, turn unto me, but she returned not. Amend your Ways and your Doings, and obey the Voice of the Lord your God, and the Lord will repent him of the Evil that he hath pronounced against you. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your Transgressions, so Iniquity shall not be your Ruin; and innumerable the like Overtures we have of Grace and Mercy to them; all which they proudly and perversely rejected, persisting in their wicked Courses: They even repelled and silenced, they rudely treated and persecuted the Prophets sent unto them with Messages of kind Warning, and Overtures of Grace; so obstructing all access of Mercy to themselves: They say to the Seers, see not; and to the Prophets prophesy not unto us right things: So *Esay* reports their Proceeding; Which of the Prophets did not your Fathers persecute: So *St. Stephen* expostulates with them. Neither were gentler Chastisements designed for their Correction and Cure any-wise available; they made no Impression on them, they produced no Change in them: In vain (saith God) I have smitten your Children, they have received no Correction. And, Thou hast smitten them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive Correction; they have made their Faces harder than a Rock, they have refused to return; and, The People turneth not to him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts. Unto this *καταπισμὸς εἰς ἀπώλειαν*, this perfect Fitness (as *St. Paul* speaketh) this maturity of desperate and irrecoverable Impiety, had that People grown, not at once, and on a sudden, but by continual steps of Provocation, through a long course of Time, during that divine Patience sparing them, and by various Expedients striving to recover them. This Consideration is frequently insisted upon, especially in the Prophet *Jeremy*, The Children of Israel, and the Children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth; since the day that your Fathers came forth out of the Land of Egypt unto this day, I have even sent unto you all my Servants the Prophets, daily rising up early, and sending them; Yet they hearkened not unto me, &c. Well then, after so many hundred Years of abused Patience, and unsuccessful Labour to reclaim them, it was needful that Justice should have her Course upon them: Yet how then did God inflict it, with what Mildness and Moderation, with what Pity and Relenting? Nevertheless (say they in *Nehemiah*) for thy great Mercies sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them, for thou art a gracious and merciful God. And, Thou hast punished us less than our Iniquities deserve, doth *Ezra* confess. I will not execute the fierceness of my Anger; doth God himself resolve and declare in *Hosea*. So



mild he was as to the measure of his punishing; and what Compassion accompanied it, those pathological Expressions declare: *My Heart is turned within me, my Repentings are kindled together. Is Ephraim my dear Son, is he a pleasant Child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still, therefore my Bowels are troubled for him. In all their Afflictions he was afflicted, &c.* We may add; that notwithstanding all these Provocations of his Wrath, and Abusings of his Patience, which thus necessitated God to execute his Vengeance; yet even during the Execution thereof, and while his Hand was so stretched forth against them, he did retain Thoughts of Favour and Intentions of doing good, even toward this so ingrateful, so insensible, so incorrigible a People: *For a small time (saith God) have I forsaken thee, but with great Mercies will I gather thee: I know the Thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, Thoughts of Peace, and not of Evil, to give you an expected End.* Now these Things being seriously laid together, have we not occasion and ground sufficient even in this Instance, no less to admire and adore the wonderful Benignity, Mercy, and Patience of God, than to dread and tremble at his Justice?

V. As for the last so calamitous and piteous Destruction of *Hierusalem*, with the grievous Consequences thereof, as we might apply thereto the former Considerations, so we shall only observe what was peculiar in that Case; that God dispensed such Means to prevent it; (to remove the meritorious Causes thereof, obstinate Impenitency and Incredulity; resisting the Truth by him sent from Heaven with so clear a Revelation and powerful Confirmation; despising the Spirit of God, and the Dictates of their own Conscience; basely misusing divers ways, and at last cruelly murdering the Son of God) such Means, I say, God did employ for the removing those Provocations of Vengeance, which (as our Lord himself saith) were sufficient to have converted *Tyre* and *Sidon*; yea, to have preserved *Sodom* it self; so that our *Saviour* could with a compassionate Grief deplore the Unsuccessfulness of his tender Affection, and solicitous Care for their Welfare, in these passionate Terms; *How often would I have gathered thy children as a hen gathers her chickens under her wing, but ye would not?* That *St. John* the Baptist his sharp Reproofs, his powerful Exhortations, his downright and clear forewarnings of what would follow (*Even now, said he, the axe is laid to the root of the tree*) attended with so remarkable Circumstances of his Person, and his Carriage (which induced all the World about him to regard him as no ordinary Man, but a special Instrument of God, and Messenger from Heaven) did yet find no effect considerable; the *Pharisees* and *Lawyers*, those corrupt Guides, whose Authority managed the blind Multitude, defeating the counsel of God toward themselves, as *St. Luke* speaketh; (that is, defeating his gracious Purpose of reclaiming them from Disobedience, and consequently of withholding the Judgments imminent) they reviled the Person of that venerable Prophet, *He hath a devil*, said they; they slighted his Premonitions, and rejected his Advices, by observing which, those dreadful Mischiefs, which fell upon their rebellious Heads, might have been averted. We may add, that even those fearful Judgments were tempered with Mixtures of favourable Design, not only to the Community of Mankind (which by so remarkable a Vengeance upon the Persecutors of our Lord and the Scorners of his Doctrine was converted unto, or confirmed in the Christian Faith) but even toward that People whom it served to convince of their Errors and Crimes; to induce them to Repentance, to provoke them unto the Acknowledgment and Embracing of God's Truth, so palpably vindicated by him. So that I might here apply that Passage of *St. Paul* (if not directly and adequately according to his Sense, yet with no incongruous Allusion at least) *Have they stumbled, that they should fall* (or, was there no other Design of God's Judgments upon them, but their utter Ruin?) *in whom No such matter; but through their fall salvation came to the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy (or emulation.)* And, in effect, as our Lord in the midst of his Sufferings did affectionately pray for God's Mercy upon them, as the Apostles did offer Reconciliation unto them all indifferently, who would repent, and were willing to embrace it; so were such of them as were disposed to comply with those Invitations, received to grace, how deeply soever involved in the continued Guilt of those enormous Persecutions, Injuries and Blasphemies; as particularly *Saint Paul*, that illustrious Example of God's Patience and Mercy in this Case. So that neither by this instance is any Attribute of God more signalized, than his transcendent Goodness,







affect us? How prodigiously cold and hard is that Heart, which cannot be warm'd and softned into Affection by so melting a Consideration?

2. It should produce, as grateful Sense in our Hearts, so real Endeavours of thankful Obedience in our Lives. It should make us *walk worthy of God, to all well-pleasing, bringing forth fruit in every good work*; taking heed of doing as did *Hezekiah*, of whom it is said; that he *rendered not according to the benefit done unto him, for his heart was lifted up; therefore was wrath upon him*; that we may not have that Expostulation justly applied unto us: *Do ye thus requite the Lord; O foolish people and unwise?*

3. It should engage us the more to fear God; complying with the Prophet's Admonition; *Fear the Lord and his goodness*. Considering that intimation of the Psalmist; *There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared*; observing that Advice of Samuel, *Only fear the Lord, and serve him, for consider what great things he hath done for you*. For that indeed nothing is more terrible, than Goodness slighted, and Patience abused.

4. It should humble, abash and grieve us, for having crossed and offended such exceeding Goodness and Mercy. It should cause us greatly to detest our Sins, which lie under so heinous an Aggravation, to be deeply displeased with our selves, who have so unworthily committed them.

5. It should therefore render us wary and vigilant against the Commission of any Sin; that is, of incurring the Guilt of so enormous Ingratitude and Baseness; making us cautious of doing like those, of whom 'tis confessed in *Nehemiah*; *They did eat, and were filled and delighted themselves in thy great goodness; nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and said thy laws behind their back*.

6. It should also breed and nourish in us Faith and Hope in God. For what Reason can we have to distrust of so great Goodness; that he will refuse to help us in our need; that he will fail in Accomplishment of his Promise; that he will withhold what is convenient for us? It should preserve us from Despair. What Temptation can we have to despair of Mercy, if we heartily repent of our Misdoings, and sincerely endeavour to please him?

7. It should upon the same Account excite us to a free and constant exercise of all Devotions. For why should we be shy or fearful of entering into so friendly and favourable a Presence; why should we be backward from having (upon any occasion or need) a recourse to him, who is so willing, so desirous, so ready to do us good? What should hinder us from delighting in Oblations of Blessing and Praise unto him?

8. It ought to render us submissive, patient and contented under God's Hand, of Correction, or Trial, as knowing that it cannot be without very just Cause, that such Goodness seemeth displeased with us; that we are the chief Causes of our Suffering, or our Want; so that we can have no good Cause to repine, or complain: For, *Wherefore doth the living man complain? since a man (suffers) for the punishment of his sins*; since it is *our sins that withhold good things from us*. Since also we considering this Attribute may be assured, that all God's Dispensations do aim and tend to our Good.

9. It should also in gratitude toward God, and imitation of him, engage us to be good; kind and bountiful, peaceable, and apt to forgive; meek and gentle, pitiful and affectionate toward our Brethren. *To be good and merciful, as our heavenly Father is merciful and benign even toward the wicked and ungrateful*; to be *kind unto one another, full of bowels, forgiving one another, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us*.

10. Lastly, We ought to have an especial Care of perverting this excellent Truth by Mistakes and vain Presumptions; that we *do not turn the grace of God into wantonness*, or occasion of licentious Practice. Because God is very good and merciful, we must not conceive him to be fond, or slack, or careless; that he is apt to indulge us in Sin, or to connive at our presumptuous Transgression of his Laws. No; *ἐνταῦθα τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἡ ἀγαθότης, ἡ μωρονομία* (the hatred of wickedness is consequent upon goodness even as such, as *Clemens Alex.* saith) God even as he is good, cannot but detest that which is opposite and prejudicial to Goodness; he cannot but maintain the Honour and Interest thereof; he cannot, he will not endure us to dishonour him, to wrong our neighbour, to spoil our selves. As he is a sure Friend to us, as his Creatures, so he is an implacable Enemy to us as impeni-



Impenitent Rebels and Apostates from our Duty. *The wicked, and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.* As he is infinitely benign, so he is also perfectly holy, and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. *He is not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with him. The foolish shall not stand in his sight, he hateth all workers of iniquity. His face is against them that do evil.* Finally, as God is gracious to all such as are capable of his Love, and qualified for his Mercy; so he is an impartial and upright Judge, who will deal with Men according to their Deserts, according to the Tenour of his Laws and Ordinances; according to his immutable Decree and Word: so that as we have great Reason to trust, and hope in him, so we have no true ground to presume upon him; vainly to trifle, or insolently to dally with him.

But I leave this Point to be farther improved by your Meditations.

*Grant we beseech thee, Almighty God, that the words which we have heard this day with our outward ears, may through thy grace be so grafted inwardly in our hearts, that they may bring forth in us the fruit of good living, to the honour and praise of thy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.*

## SERMON XXXVIII.

### No Respect of PERSONS with GOD.

ROM. II. 11.

*For, There is no Respect of Persons with God.*

**I**T is an ordinary Conceit, grounded on a superficial View of Things, that Almighty God dispenseth his Gifts with great Inequality, and dealeth very partially with Men; being lavish in his Bounty to some, but sparing therein to others; slack and indulgent in calling some to Account, but rigorous and severe in Judgment toward others.

Which Imagination often hath Influence upon the Affections and the Actions of Men; so that hence some Men do highly presume, others are much discouraged; some are apt to boast themselves special Darlings and Favourites of Heaven; others are tempted to complain of their being quite deserted, or neglected thereby.

But whoever more carefully will observe Things, and weigh them with good Consideration, shall find this to be a great mistake; and that in truth God distributeth his Favours with very equal Measures, he poizeth the Scales of Justice with a most even hand; so that reasonably no Man should be exalted, no Man should be dejected in Mind, upon Account of any considerable Difference in God's regard towards him, and other Persons; the which is clearly discovered by God, or merely dependeth on his Will and Providence.

The Advantages, which one Man hath above another, being estimated morally, in reference to solid Felicity and Content, are indeed none; or are not absolutely made by God, but framed by Men unto themselves. For

God is indifferently affected toward Persons as such, nakedly and privately considered; or as divested of moral Conditions, Qualifications and Actions; He in his Dealing, whether as Benefactor or Judge, purely considereth the Reason and Exigency of Things, the intrinsic Worth of Persons, the real Merits of each Cause; He maketh no arbitrary or groundless Discriminations; he neither loveth and favoureth, nor loatheth and discountenanceth any Person unaccountably: He



He doth utterly disclaim Partiality, or Respect of Persons, as a calumnious Asper-  
sion on him, and a Scandal to his Providence.

Such in holy Scriptures he representeth himself, upon various Occasions; decla-  
ring his perfect Impartiality, and that nothing beside the Right and Reason of  
Cases doth sway with him; all other Considerations being impertinent and infig-  
nificant to him. For Instance,

It is declared, That he hath no partial Respect to Nations; for the Piety of  
(Rom. 10. 12.) Job an Edomite, of Melchisedeck a Canaanite, of Jethro a Midianite were very  
3. 29.) pleasing to him; he favourably did hear the Prayers, and accept the Alms of Cor-  
nelius a Roman Soldier; whereupon St. Peter made this general Reflection, Of a

Acts 10. 31. Truth I perceive, that God is no respecter of Persons; But in every Nation, he that  
feareth him, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him.

He is declared not to regard the external Profession of true Religion, but real  
Practice according to it; He rendereth (saith St. Paul) to every man according to  
(Gal. 3. 6.) his deeds—tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of  
8. 15. 3. 28.) the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace to every man  
Col. 3. 11.) that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for (addeth the Apo-  
Rom. 2. 6.)-  
9. 10. file, assigning the Reason of this proceeding) there is no respect of Persons with  
(10. 12. 3. 29.) God.

He is said not to respect Faces, or any exterior Appearances, however speci-  
ous in the Eye of the World; according to that saying of God to Samuel, at the  
1 Sam. 16. 7. choice of David before his Brethren; Look not on his countenance, or on the height  
of his stature, because I have refused him; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for  
man looketh on the outward appearance; but the Lord looketh on the heart.

It is expressed, That he hath no respect to the outward Estate, or worldly  
Rank and Dignity of Men; but that Princes and Peasants, Masters and Servants,  
the honourable or wealthy, and the mean or poor are of equal Consideration with  
him; He (saith Job) accepteth not the persons of Princes, nor regardeth the rich  
Job 34. 19. more than the poor; for they are all the work of his hands; and St. Paul biddeth  
Sap. 6. 7. Masters to deal fairly with their Servants, knowing (saith he) that your Master is  
Ephes. 6. 9. also in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.  
Coloss. 3. 25. 4. 1.

We are taught, that He doth not regard even the most sacred Offices, or more  
worthy Accomplishments of Men, in Prejudice to the verity of Things, or equity  
Gal. 2. 6. of the Case; for hence St. Paul maintaineth his resolute Behaviour toward those  
great Pillars of Religion, St. Peter and St. James; Of these who seemed to be some-  
what, whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me, God accepteth no man's  
person.

It is frequently inculcated, that he hath no Consideration of any Gifts, of Sa-  
crifices, of Services presented to him with sinister intent, to compound for Sin,  
or excuse from Duty, to pervert Justice, or palliate Wrong; according to that  
Deut. 10. 17. [Declaration of Moses, The Lord your God is God of Gods, and Lord of Lords, a  
great God, a mighty and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh re-  
2 Chron. 19. 7. ward; and that] Charge of King Jehoshaphat to his Judges, Let the Fear of the  
Lord be upon you; take heed, and do it; for there is no iniquity with the Lord our  
God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts. And, Do not  
Ecclus. 35. 12. think (saith the Hebrew Wise-man) to corrupt (him) with gifts;  
Prov. 15. 8. 21. 27. for such he will not receive; and trust not to unrighteous sacrifices;  
Amos 5. 21, 22. for the Lord is Judge, and with him is no respect of persons.  
Jer. 6. 20. Mic. 6. 7, 8. Hos. 6. 6.

In fine, it is often generally declared, that God impartially dispenseth Recom-  
pences, in just Proportion, according to the Deeds of Men: He (saith St. Paul)  
Rom. 2. 11. that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no  
Col. 3. 25. respect of persons; And if (saith St. Peter) ye call upon the Father, who without  
1 Pet. 1. 17. respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your so-  
journing here in fear.

There is nothing more frequently asserted, or more seriously urged in holy  
Scripture, than this Point, that God will judge, and deal with Men, not accor-  
ding to his absolute, antecedent Affections, but according to their own works, or  
the tenour of their Practice, duly scanned and estimated by the Rules of Justice;  
so that the really better Man will certainly prove the happier, and the worse  
Man shall be the more wretched: He will reward every Man (saith our Lord)  
Matt. 16. 27. Rom. 2. 6. Apoc. 2. 23. 20. 12. *καὶ ἕκαστος ἀντὶ τοῦ ἔργου αὐτοῦ*, according to his practice; Everyone (saith St. Paul) shall re-  
ceive



ceive the things done in his body, *κατὰ τὴν ἰσχύαν*, suitably (in just proportion) to his Works; and Each Man shall receive *ἰδίῳ μισθῷ* his own wages according to his own labour; and then praise (or a due taxation) shall be to every man from God: Behold (saith He in the Revelation) I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to recompense each man, *ὡς τὸ ἀντὶ ἰσχύος ἔσται*, as his work shall be.

2 Cor. 5. 10.  
1 Cor. 3. 8.  
(Jer. 17. 10.  
32. 19.  
Psal. 62. 13.)  
1 Cor. 4. 5.  
Apoc. 22. 12.  
*ἁπλῶς ἕκαστος*  
*ἰσχύει*.

Wherefore by sacred Testimonies it is abundantly manifest, that Impartiality is a divine Attribute, and Perfection of God; the which (for our greater Satisfaction, and farther Illustration of the Point) may be also evinced by divers Arguments, some proving that it must be so, others shewing that it is so, some inferring it *a priori*, from the prime most avowed Attributes of God's Nature; and from his Relations to Men; others arguing it *a posteriori*, from principal Instances of God's Proceedings and providential Dispensations toward Men.

Of the first Sort are these.

1. God is impartial, because he is perfectly wise, and thence doth truly estimate Persons and Things.

Wisdom doth look evenly, with a free and pure (an indifferent and uncorrupt) Eye upon all Things; apprehending and esteeming each as it is in it self; making no Distinction where it findeth none; not preferring one Thing before another, without Ground of Difference in them. It doth not fix a Valuation on its Objects, but acknowledgeth it, and taketh it for such as it is in themselves.

Wherefore God cannot have any blind Affection, or Fondness toward any Person grounded on no Reason, or upon any unaccountable Prejudice. No Person can seem amiable, or odious to him, who is not in himself truly such.

This Argument is often used in Scripture; and to assure us of this Truth, it is there frequently affirmed, that God doth search the Hearts, doth try the Spirits, doth weigh the Actions of Men: *The Lord (saith Hannah) is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed: All the ways of man (saith Solomon) are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weighed the spirits: His eyes (saith the Psalmist) behold, his eye-lids try the children of men: And, O Lord of Hosts (saith Jeremy) that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart—Thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings: [I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.]*

1 Sam. 2. 3.  
Prov. 16. 2.  
Psal. 11. 4.  
Jer. 11. 20.  
20. 12.  
Jer. 32. 19.

2. God cannot be partial, because he is perfectly righteous, just and holy. This Reason adjoined to the former, doth make up a compleat Demonstration: For partiality doth proceed, either from blindness of Mind, or from perverseness of Will; He therefore, who hath both an exact knowledge of Things, and a perfect rectitude of Will, can no-wise be partial; the one enabling him to judge, the other disposing him to affect Things as they are and deserve; to esteem and love that which is indeed worthy and lovely; to despise and dislike that which is despicable and odious; to have no Opinion, or Affection toward a Person abstracted from all Qualifications; such an one being no special Object of a wise and just either Esteem or Contempt, Love or Hatred.

As these Causes are always inseparably connected (for what is justness, but a disposition of Will, to follow, without Deflexion, the Dictates of Wisdom?) So the Effect must necessarily follow; according to numberless Testimonies in Scripture importing, that *The righteous Lord loveth righteousness; but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth: The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous—but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*

Psal. 11. 7.  
(7. 11. 33. 5.  
45. 7. 14. 8.)  
Psal. 11. 5. 5. 5.  
Ps. 34. 15. 16.

3. God is impartial, because he is infinitely great and potent; whence all Creatures are in the same Degree inferior, at the same Distance remote from him; all are equally at his Discretion and Disposal; he hath no need of any; what therefore should incline him to regard one before another, excepting only Goodness, wherein he delighteth? So the Wise-man discourseth, *He that is Lord of all, shall fear no man's person, neither shall he stand in awe of any man's greatness, for he hath made the small and great, and careth for all alike.* So Moses did imply, *The Lord your God is God of Gods, and Lord of Lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not Persons.*

Sap. 6. 7.  
Deut. 10. 17.

4. God



Exod. 24. 16, 7. 4. God is impartial, because he is immensely good and benign; both intensive-  
Numb. 14. 18. ly in the Degree, and extensively as to the Objects of his Goodness; so that he  
Pl. 86. 5, 15. 103. 8. 145. 8. favoureth all equally, because all thoroughly, so far as may well be according to  
their Condition and Capacity; whence if there be any Difference or Defect, the  
ground thereof is not in his Nature or Will, but in the different Qualifications of  
Creatures.

There is a double Goodness or Love of God; one absolute, preceding all regard  
to Personal Qualities, or Deeds; the other conditionate, and consequent on spe-  
cial Regards; in both these God is impartial; for the first is general and unconfi-  
ned, according to that of the Psalmist, *The Lord is good to all, and his mercies*  
Pl. 145. 9, 16. *are over all his works*; and those Sayings in the Gospel, *He is kind unto the un-*  
Luke 6. 35. *thankful, and to the evil; He maketh his Sun to rise on the evil, and on the good;*  
Matt. 5. 45. *and sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust*; The second is grounded on special  
Reasons of the Case, and adapted to the Rules of Justice, demanding it; accor-  
ding whereto, *The Lord is rich (in mercy) toward all that call upon him. He*  
Rom. 10. 12. *will fulfill the desire of them that fear him, and preserveth all that love him.*  
Plal. 145. 18. *In the first there is no Difference; in the second the Difference is made by our*  
Plal. 34. 15. *selves; being founded in our voluntary Demeanour.*  
Plal. 145. 19, 20. 34. 9. 33. 18.

5. God is impartial toward all Persons, because he hath the same (natural and original) Relations toward all.

1. He is the Maker and Father of all; according to that of the Prophet, *Have*  
Mal. 2. 10. *we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?* And that of the Apostle,  
Ephes. 4. 6. *There is One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you*  
*all*; He therefore hath the same parental Kindness towards all, the same Tender-  
ness for the good of each; He is not capable of that Imperfection, which is ob-  
servable in some Parents, to be fond and indulgent to some Children above others;  
but in his Affection *The rich and poor (as the Wise-man saith) do meet together,*  
Prov. 22. 2. *the Lord is the maker of them all.*

Hence Job did collect that *God accepteth not the person of Princes, nor regardeth*  
Job 34. 39. *the rich more than the poor; for (saith he) they are all the work of his hands.*  
Job 31. 13, 14, 15. Hence the same holy Man did infer, that he was obliged to deal fairly with  
his own Servants, for that God in Judgment would consider their Case no less  
Job 31. 15. than his, upon this Account, for *Did not he that made me in the womb, make him;*  
*and did not one fashion us in the womb?*

Hence the Wise-man, who imitated Solomon, did argue an equality of gracious  
Sap. 6. 7. Providence toward all, *He hath made the small and the great, and careth for all*  
*alike.*

2. God is the common Lord of all; and therefore is concerned to protect all  
with the like Care, to govern all with the same Equity.

Hence St. Paul gathered that God is indifferently willing to shew Mercy, and  
dispense Blessings to all People; to confer the means of Salvation, and to accept  
pious Endeavours, without distinction of *Jew or Gentile*; *Is (saith he) he the*  
Rom. 3. 29. *God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? And, There is therefore no*  
Rom. 10. 12. *difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto*  
*all that call upon him.*

Hence the same Apostle doth urge Masters to be just and kind to their Servants;  
Ephes. 6. 9. for that God as the common Master hath an equal respect to both; *knowing that*  
1 Tim. 4. 10. *your Master also is in Heaven, and there is no respect of Persons with him.*

3. God is the Saviour of all; desiring and designing that all Men should be sa-  
ved and come to the knowledge of the truth; being willing that no man should pe-  
rish, but that all should come to Repentance.

Wherefore out of Philanthropy and Love to Mankind he  
Tit. 3. 11. 2. 11. 1 Joh. 4. 14. Luke 9. 56. sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world; to give himself  
Joh. 3. 17. 12. 47. 2 Cor. 5. 19. 1 Tim. a ransom for all men, to taste death for every man.  
2. 6. Heb. 2. 9.

And what greater instance could there be of perfect Impartiality?

So by Reasons from the principal Attributes and Relations of God his Impartia-  
lity may be deduced: The same also may be declared from his Proceedings and  
Dealings with Men. For,

1. God



1. God hath proposed to all Men indifferently the same Terms and Conditions of gaining his Love and Favour, of enjoying his Bounty and Mercy, of obtaining Rewards and Felicity from him. Clem. Pal. 1. 4.

The same Laws and Rules of Life are prescribed to all Persons, as Men, and as Christians.

The natural Dictates of Reason, the Precepts of holy Scripture, the great moral Duties of Religion, by Observance whereof God's Favour is retained, and Salvation assured, are of general Concern and common Obligation to all without exception.

God hath not framed one Law, or one Gospel for Princes and great Men, another for Peasants and mean Artisans; He hath not chalked out one way toward Heaven for the Rich, another for the Poor to walk in; But all, *high and low, rich and poor one with another*, are tied to observe the Precepts of Piety, of Charity, of Justice, of Temperance, Sobriety and Chastity, of Modesty, Humility and Patience; none (great or small) can otherwise than by proceeding in the common Road of virtuous Practice, arrive to Happiness. *He that doeth the will of my Father that is in heaven, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Matt. 7. 21.

*If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments: Enter in through the strait gate; Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life; To them, who by patient continuance in well-doing seek glory and honour and immortality, eternal life will be conferred; These are the grand infallible Maxims, the fix'd irreversible Decrees, expressing the general Duty and Doom of Mankind, according to the eternal Reason of Things, and the declared Will of God Almighty, our Sovereign Governour and Judge.* Matt. 19. 17.  
Matt. 7. 13.  
Luke 13. 24.  
Psal. 34. 12.  
Apoc. 22. 14.  
Rom. 2. 7.

Whoever it is, that will please God, that will have his Love, that will be happy by his Grace, must humbly submit to God's Will, must faithfully obey God's Laws, must carefully walk in God's Way; from this Course there can be no exemption, no dispensation, no special Privilege for any Person whatever. John 15. 14.

As all Men naturally, by indissoluble Bands of Obligation, are the Subjects and Servants of God; so God indispensibly and inexcusably doth require the same Loyalty and Fidelity, the same Diligence, the same Reverence from all.

Great Men sometimes may live, as if they conceited themselves free from the Obligations which bind other Men; as if they had not Souls (as we poor Mortals have) to be saved, or were to be saved in some other way; as if Obedience to the divine Laws doth not touch them, but only doth belong to the Commonalty; as if they had special Indulgence to live in Pride, Luxury and Sloth, might warrantably practice Injustice, Oppression, Revenge; might *cum privilegio* be Leud and Lascivious, with-hold their Debts, take God's Name in vain, neglect Devotion and the Service of God; but in thus doing they much abuse themselves; for they no less than others are obnoxious to Guilt, and to Punishment for such Misdemeanours against the divine Laws. In truth if there be any difference in the Case, it is only this, that they in all equity, ingenuity and gratitude are obliged to a more strict, more faithful, more diligent Observance of God's Laws; they being more indebted to God for his special Bounty to them; they having larger Talents and Advantages committed to their Trust, their Deportment being of higher Consequence, and most influential on the World, they being liable to render an Account according to that just Rule, *Unto whom much is given, of him much shall be required*; whence their Eminency of Condition doth not excuse them from common Duties, but doth advance their Obligation, will aggravate their Neglect, will enflame their Reckoning, will plunge them deeper into woful Punishment; according to that of the Wise-man, *A sharp judgment shall be to them that are in high places; for mercy will soon pardon the meanest, but mighty men shall be mightily tormented.* Luke 12. 48.  
Sap. 6. 5, 6.

2. All Persons have the same Means, the same Aids, the same Supports afforded to them, for Ability to perform their Duty, and attain their Happiness.

The Word of God, as the Light of Heaven, doth indifferently Shine to all Men, for instructing their Minds, for directing their Practice, for *guiding their feet in the way of peace.*

The divine Grace is ever at Hand ready to assist all those, who sincerely and seriously do apply themselves to serve God.



Seasonable Comforts are never wanting to support those who need them, and who in their Distress seek them from God, who *healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds*; so that when *The poor man crieth, the Lord heareth him, and saveth him out of his troubles.*

The universal good Spirit of God (the Fountain of Light and Wisdom, of spiritual Power and Strength, of Consolation and Joy) is communicated according to the Needs of Men, and Exigencies of Occasion; preventing them by direction to the right Way, by reclaiming them from ill Courses, by exciting in them good Thoughts and good Desires; quickning their good Resolutions, and assisting in the Pursuit of them; enabling them to resist Temptations, and to combat with their spiritual Adversaries; to such best Purposes the holy Spirit is given to all in needful Seasons and Measures; especially to those who do earnestly seek it, do faithfully use it, do treat it well.

3. God hath provided, and doth propose to all Men the same Encouragements for Obedience, the same Punishments for Transgression; the which being the same in kind do only differ in degree, proportionably to the good Deeds, or bad Demerits of Persons.

God hath appointed one Heaven for all pious and virtuous Persons; of what Nation, of what Rank, of what Condition soever they are; He hath prepared *those things, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart of man conceived, for all that love him.* For all that have fought the good fight, and kept the faith, and love his appearance, the Lord, the righteous judge, hath laid up a crown of righteousness.

Immortality of Life, an unfading Crown of Glory, a Kingdom that cannot be shaken, unspeakable Joys, endless Bliss God hath covenanted, and promised to all his faithful Servants; to all who in his way please to accept and embrace them, *ο δειλον, He that willeth, let him take of the water of life, freely*; And what greater Rewards could there be assigned? What room is there for partiality, where all are capable of the same equally great, because in a manner immense Felicity? *Many (saith our Saviour) shall come from the East and from the West, and from the North, and from the South, and shall sit down with Abraham and with Isaac, and with Jacob in the Kingdom of heaven.*

Lazarus the poor Beggar, shall rest with the illustrious Moses, and the noble Daniel, with David, and Hezekiah, and Josiah, and all pious Princes in the bosom of Abraham. The poor Fishermen, the painful Tent-makers, the sorry Publicans shall reign together with Constantine, and Theodosius, and all those good Princes, who have faithfully served God, and promoted his Glory. The Rich, well using their Wealth, may obtain that State, *treasuring up to themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life*; The Poor, contentedly bearing their Condition, have a good Title thereto, expressed in those Words, *Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God.*

On the other hand the same dismal Punishments are threatened to all presumptuous, contumacious, and impenitent Transgressors of God's Law, however dignified or distinguished; be they Princes, or Subjects, Noble or Base, Wealthy or Indigent; the same unquenchable Fire, the same gnawing Worm, the same weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of Teeth; the same utter Darkness; the same burning Lake of Brimstone; the same extreme disconsolate Anguish is reserved for them all: *Depart from me, Go ye cursed into everlasting fire, will be the Doom pronounced on all the workers of iniquity; Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish will be upon every soul that doth evil.*

No Regard will be had to the Quality of Men in this World; for *the rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linnen, and fared sumptuously every day, was not excused from hell, and torment*; there is a Tophet ordained of old, even for Kings; *mighty men shall be mightily tormented, if they have mightily sinned.*

Even present Encouragements of Vertue in this Life, The Joys and Comforts of God's holy Spirit, the sweet Elapses of spiritual Consolation in Devotion, the peace of God, and delicious Sense of his Love, the cheerful Satisfaction of a good Conscience, the Joy in believing God's Truth, and hoping for Accomplishment of his Promises, the Delight in obeying God's Commandments, the Blessing of God upon good Undertakings and happy Success therein, the co-operation of all things for good to them who love God, the supply of all Wants, and satisfaction of all Desires, the experimental Assurance of God's constant Protection and gracious Provi-



Providence over those who fear him, and trust in him, (according to numberless Declarations and Promises in holy Scripture) are indifferently dispensed to all, who shall use the means to attain them, in way of conscientious Practice.

As correspondently the temporal Discouragements from Sin (crosses, disappointments, vexations, miseries) are without exception allotted to all Transgressors of God's Law, according to many Denunciations therein.

4. The Impartiality of God doth appear from his universal Providence, carefully watching over all and every Person, dispensing good Things to each, according to his need, without distinction.

*Bonus omnipotens ita curat universos tanquam singulos, ita singulos tanquam solos. Aug. Conf.*

Is any Man in extreme Want, his liberal Hand presently doth reach forth a supply; for *He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry Soul with goodness; He openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing.*

Is any Man in Distress? The Lord is ready to afford relief; according to that repeated burthen of the 107th Psalm, *Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses?*

Is any Man engaged in Sin and Guilt? He is patient and long-suffering; not pouring forth his Anger, not withholding his Mercies; letting his Sun arise, and his Showers descend upon the most unworthy and ingrateful; this he doth so generally, that commonly by apparent events it is not easily discernible, to whom God beareth special Favour; according to that observation of the Preacher, *No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them; all things coming alike to all.* How then can any Man complain of Partiality in him, who exerciseth so unconfined Bounty, Clemency and Patience?

If there be any considerable Difference, it is only this, that God hath a peculiar Care of the Poor, the Afflicted, the Oppressed, the Helpless and Disconsolate, who do most need (and thence are most induced to seek) his Succour and Comfort; being also commonly better qualified to receive them; as is frequently declared in Scripture.

It is true, that God hath his particular Friends, his Favourites, his Privados, whom he doth specially regard and countenance; upon whom he conferreth extraordinary Boons and Graces; namely those who do love, who do fear, who do trust in, who do honour him, who do obey him; concerning whom it is said, *We know that all things work together for good to them that love God; and The Lord preserveth all those that love him; There is no want to them that fear him; He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him, he also will bear their cry, and will save them: The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants, and none of them that trust in him, shall be desolate: Them that honour me, I will honour: The Lord loveth the righteous; The Eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry; Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*

But evidently there is no Partiality in this; for he doth not favour them irrespectively as Persons, but as in Justice specially qualified for Favour, Friendship, Dutifulness, Reverence toward him, being the highest Vertues, and arguing a Mind endued with Dispositions (with Equity, with Ingenuity, with Gratitude, with sober Wisdom, with Love of Truth and Goodness) which demand a Correspondence of Love and Respect from God himself. And as we do not hold a Man partial, who beareth a special Affection and Regard to those, who express good-will, who deal kindly and fairly with them, who serve them faithfully, and pay them due respect; so neither is God partial, if he doth specially bless good Men upon the like Accounts.

Especially considering, that God doth not so favour mere Pretenders, who profess to love and honour him, but do not love true Goodness; fond, superstitious, hypocritical People, who call Lord, Lord, but practice Iniquity; who think to please him by affected Services: who court and flatter him with their Lips; who would bribe him with their Gifts and Sacrifices.

5. All Christians, without Distinction, have the same illustrious Relations, and honourable Privileges, the most great and glorious that can be imagined.

Of what greater Honour is a Man capable, than to be adopted into the Blood-royal of Heaven, to be called to be one of the Sons of God? *Ye are all the Sons of God, by faith in Christ Jesus. God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, that he might redeem us—and, that we might receive the adoption of Sons.*



1 John 3. 1.  
John 1. 12.  
Gal. 4.

*ἰδὲν ποταμὸν ἀγάπης* Behold (saith St. John) what love the Father hath given us, that we should be called the Sons of God. This is a Privilege, which God hath given, which Christ hath purchased for us all. And whosoever received him, he gave them *ἐξουσίαν ταύτην*, (this Power, this Privilege, this Advantage) that they should become the sons of God.

To what higher Dignity can any one pretend, than to be Heir of a Kingdom? By the most infallible Assurance that can be; by Covenant, by Promise of God;

Rom. 8. 17.

Gal. 4. 7.

Tit. 3. 7.

Heb. 1. 14.

Jam. 2. 5.

Matt. 25. 34.

Luke 12. 32.

22. 29.

Rev. 1. 6.

5. 10.

1. 9.

2 Tim. 4. 18.

2 Pet. 1. 11.

Heb. 12. 28.

1 Thess. 2. 12.

Col. 1. 13.

such are all good Christians, God's Children; for if sons, then heirs (saith the Apostle) heirs of God, co-heirs with Christ: Heirs of God's Kingdom; for, Hearken (saith St. James) my beloved Brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him?

Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you.

Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you a Kingdom.

I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me.

To what higher Pitch can the most ambitious Soul aspire, than to be a King?

Such, St. John saith that our Lord hath constituted every good Christian; *παράκλητος*, not of a carnal, an earthly, a temporal Kingdom (which is unstable, is subject to various Chances and Crosses, cannot endure long, or last any considerable Time) but of a spiritual, a celestial, an eternal Kingdom, which cannot be shaken; which hath continual Rest, Peace, Joy.

We are by God called unto his Kingdom and Glory.

—translated into the Kingdom of his own dear Son.

To be the Brethren of Christ; who is the Sovereign Lord of Glory, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

Is it not a considerable Honour to be the Friends of our Lord? So is every poor Soul, which hath the Conscience to serve him faithfully; for, *ἡμεῖς οἱ φίλοι αὐτοῦ* ye do whatsoever I command you.

Phil. 3. 20.

Heb. 13. 20.

12. 22.

Eph. 2. 19.

Deut. 10. 7.

(Col. 3. 25.)

All are Citizens, free Denizens of the Heavenly Commonwealth; *συμπολίταις*

6. All Men are liable to the same Judgment, at the same Tribunal, before that one impartial, inflexible Judge, who cannot be corrupted with Gifts, or dazzled with Shews, or moved by any sinister Regards.

All Persons must stand before that Bar upon equal Ground; without any Advantage; according to that Representation of St. John; *ὁ ὢν ὁ ὢν* I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened—and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

The greatest Monarchs, the mightiest Potentates, the most redoubtable Warriors, and successful Conquerours (the man, who made the earth to tremble, that did shake Kingdoms; ) that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; who affected to ascend into heaven, and to exalt his throne above the stars of God, to ascend above the heights of the clouds, and to be like the most high.

There shall they stand bare and divested of all their Phantastry; their splendid Pomp, their numerous Retinue, their Guards, their Parasites.

No Consideration there will be had of their windy Titles, of their gay Attire, and glittering Pomp.

No Respect will be had to the Dread of their Name, to the Fame of their Prowess; to that spurious Glory, for which they unsetled Mankind, and overturned the World; their Actions will be strictly scann'd according to the Rules of God's Law, and common Equity.

They will be put to answer for all the Violences and Outrages, for all the Spoils and Rapines, for all the Blood and Slaughters, for all the Ruins, Devastations and Desolations their cruel Ambition hath caused; for all the Sins they have committed, and all the Mischiefs they have done.

They who now have so many Flatterers and Adorers, will not then find one Advocate to plead for them.

Thus it may appear that God is impartial.

But there are divers obvious Exceptions against this Doctrine. As,

Obj. 1. Is it not apparent that the Gifts of God are distributed with great Inequality?

Doth not one swim in Wealth and Plenty, while another coucheth under the Burthen of extreme Want and Penury?

Are



Are not some perched aloft in high Dignity, while others crawl upon the Ground, and grovel in despicable Meanness?

Are not some clothed with purple and fine linnen, and fare deliciously every day; Luke 16. 19 while others scarce find rags to cover them, and lie at the door begging for relief? 20.

Do not some thrive and prosper in their Affairs, while others are disappointed and crossed in their undertakings?

Was is not truly observed of some Persons (and those least deserving good Fortune) *They are inclosed in their own fatness. Their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than hearts could wish?* Psal. 17. 10. 73. 7. Job 21. 7.

And whence doth this difference come, but from God's Hand; *who* (as the Apostle asketh) *maketh thee to differ* from another, but God the Disposer of all things? Jer. 12. 1. Hab. 1. 16. 1 Cor. 4. 7.

To this Exception I answer:

1. That temporal Things are so inconsiderable, that they scarce deserve to come into the Balance, or to be computed; for they have but the same Proportion to spiritual Things, as Time hath to Eternity; or a finite to an infinite; which is none at all. Rom. 8. 18. Λογίζουσι γὰρ ὅτι οὐκ αἰώνιον ἐστὶν

What Partiality therefore is there, if God in Mercy and Patience bestow on bad Men a farthing in the temporal *Consolations* of this Life (if the universal Father give a small *Portion in this life* to untoward Children) while he reserveth infinite Millions for his obedient Children? Luke 6. 24. 16. 25. Psal. 17. 14.

2. The Goods of Fortune commonly are dispensed not by a special Hand of God, but according to the general Course of Providence: And what Partiality is he guilty of, who scattereth Money into a Crowd of poor People; although in scrambling some get more than other; and often the worst (being most bold and fierce) do get most?

3. Indeed the receiving those Gifts, is no sign of God's special Regard; as the Preacher well observed; *No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them; All things come alike to all, there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.* Eccles. 9. 1, 2.

4. God (as St. *Austin* saith) purposely doth sparingly deal these things to good Men, and freely bestoweth them on bad Men, to shew how little we ought to value them; how much inferiour they are to spiritual Goods. For surely he would give the best Things to his Friends, and the worst to his Enemies.

5. Even temporal Gifts are dispensed with a very even Hand; for, if barring injudicious Fancy and vulgar Opinion, we rightly prize things, we compare the Conveniencies and Inconveniencies of each State, it will be hard to judge which hath the Advantage.

Wealth hath more Advantages for Pleasure; but it hath also more Cares, more Fears, more Crosses, more Dangers, more Troubles, more Temptations.

It hath more Plenty, but withall it hath less Safety, less Ease, less Liberty, less Quiet, less real Enjoyment.

Set the Distraction of the rich Man's Mind against the Toil of the poorest Man's Body; the nauseous Surfeits of one against the griping Hunger of the other.

That which really doth constitute a State happy and content, may be common to both, or wanting to either, as the Person is disposed.

6. The Goods of Fortune are not purely Gifts, but Talents deposited in trust for God's Service, for which a proportionable Return is expected; so that he that hath less of them, hath a less Burthen to bear, and an easier Account to render.

7. Many Gifts are not dispensed with personal Regard, but for publick Good; and therefore all have an Interest in them.

The Wealth, the Power, the Reputation, the Prosperity of a Prince, of a Nobleman, of a Gentleman are not his, but his Neighbour's; for governing, for protecting, for encouraging, for assisting whom they are conferred; the World not being able to subsist in Order and Peace without subordinate Ranks, and without answerable Means to maintain them.

*Obj. 2.* It is apparent, that God dispenseth his Grace, the Light of Knowledge, and Means of Salvation very unequally; some Nations living in the clear Sunshine of the Gospel, while others sit in darkness and the shadow of death; whole Nations being detained in barbarous and brutish Ignorance. Luke 1. 69. Matt. 4. 16. Eph. 4. 18. 2. 1. Tit. 3. 3. 1 Pet. 4. 3.

To



To answer this Exception fully, would require much Discourse ; it being a dark and difficult Point ; but briefly we may say :

1. That God dispenseth Measures of Grace, according to a just, yet inscrutable Wisdom, knowing what use will be made thereof, and what Fruit Men will bear : It may therefore be a Favour not to dispense Light to them, who are not prepared to embrace and improve it well.

2. No Man can tell what God doth in preparation, and what Obstructions are made by Men to his Grace.

3. As lower Means of Grace are conferred, so proportionably less Returns are expected.

4. How hard soever it may be to descry the Reason of God's Proceedings in this Case, yet assuredly it is just, and our Ignorance of it should not prejudice the Belief of those general Truths, which are so plainly declared, concerning the universal Benignity, and impartial Equity of God.

*Obj. 3.* Is it not in holy Scripture sometimes asserted, that God doth act arbitrarily, and absolutely ; dispensing his Bounty and Mercy, without regard to any quality in Men, or Deed committed by them, either in whole, or in Proportion. — God saith, *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy* — and, *Is it not lawfull for me to do what I will with mine own ?*

Is it not a plain Instance of this Dealing alledg'd by St. Paul concerning Jacob and Esau, that *before the children were born, or had done either good or evil, God said, the elder shall serve the younger ; and in regard thereto (in the Prophet) Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*

We answer briefly, that

Such Expressions do import, not that God acteth absolutely in the thing it self, but *quoad nos* ; not that he acteth without Reason, but upon Reasons (transcending our Capacity, or our Means to know it) incomprehensible or undiscernible to us ; not that he can give no Account, but is not obliged to render any to us : That the Methods of his Providence commonly are inscrutable ; that his Proceedings are not subject to our Examination and Censure ; that his acting doth sufficiently authorize and justify it self ; that it is high Presumption and Arrogance for us to scan, sift, or contest, or cavil at the Equity or Wisdom of God's acting.

That God doth not act according to Necessity, but is free in dispensing his Mercy, and applying it to any Person, so that they have nothing to challenge upon account of their own Deserts or Works ; but must refer all to his mere Bounty.

However, there can be nothing in these Mysteries of Predestination and Providence, which really doth subvert an Assertion so often clearly expressed, and so well grounded in Reason, or the Consideration of God's Nature, Attributes, ordinary way of acting, &c.

Whatever Expressions are repugnant thereto in sound, whatever Instances (depending on occult Causes) in appearance do cross it ; it yet must stand, that God is impartially merciful, benign, just, &c.

*Obj. 4.* Had not *Jeremy*, *St. John Baptist*, *St. Paul* absolute Favours and Graces conferred on them, who were sanctified, and separated from the Womb to be Prophets and Apostles ?

*Resp.* These Favours were in Design not so much particular, and personal, as general and publick ; those Persons being raised up by God upon Occasions as needful Instruments (*Elect vessels*) of his Providence, to instruct Men, and to reduce them to God ; so that God in raising up such extraordinary Persons, did express his common Goodness to Mankind.

The like may be said of that special Favour which was vouchsafed to the holy Virgin, who was *κεχαριτωμένη*, and *blessed among women*, for the general Good of Mankind.

The Consideration of this Point is very useful, and may dispose us to many Sorts of good Practice.

1. No Man should presume upon God's dealing with him more favourably than with others ; as if he were a Darling, or Favourite ; that God will indulge him in the Commission of any Thing prohibited, or in Omission of any Duty.



No Man should indulge himself in any thing, upon a Conceit, that God will indulge him, or oversee his Errors; and that, in this Sense, *He seeth not iniquity in Jacob.*

No Man should be puffed up with Conceit, that God hath a singular Regard to him. For all such Conceits are groundless and vain; in them Men do miserably delude themselves.

No Man can otherwise sound any Assurance of God's special Love to him, than upon a good Conscience; testifying, that he doth sincerely love God, and endeavour faithfully to obey his Commandments.

3. No Man should despair of God's Favour; seeing God hath no particular Averfation from any; but every Person hath the same Grounds of Hope.

If we can buckle our Hearts to observe our Duty, we may be sure to be accepted.

*If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?*

4. No Man should be discouraged for his Condition, or Fortune. Since in allotting it to him God had no Disfavour, nor did intend him ill.

God hath no less regard to him, than to Persons of the most high, wealthy, prosperous State.

5. No Man should repine, murmur or complain of God's Dealing, as if he were unkindly used, more than others. For there is no such Thing. God deal-eth alike kindly with all.

6. No Man, upon Account of his Rank, Wealth, or worldly Advantages, should boast or pride himself; seeing thence he partaketh no more, than his meanest, and poorest Neighbour, of the principal Advantage, God's Favour.

7. No Man, upon such Accounts, should despise his Neighbour, *the brother of low degree*: For upon these Accounts it appeareth, that the *Wise man* saith truly, that *He is void of wisdom, who despiseth his neighbour*; seeing no Man can be despicable, whom God regardeth; seeing God (as *Elisha* saith) *is mighty, and despiseth not any*; seeing the meanest Person standeth on equal Terms with the greatest in the Eye of God.

8. Great Men should not take themselves for another Sort of Creatures, or another Race of Men than their poor Neighbours; that the World is theirs, and all Things are for them; that they may do what they please; that they are exempted from Laws, which oblige others; for in moral and spiritual Accounts they are upon a level with others.

They are but Fellow-Subjects, and Fellow-Servants with others; all accountable to the same Master.

9. Superiours hence should be moved to deal fairly, gently, and courteously with Inferiours; seeing these are their Fellow-Servants; equally considerable as themselves with the great Master of the Family.

This is the Use to which St. Paul applieth the Consideration;

*Masters give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye have a Master in Heaven—Ye Masters do the same things unto them (that is, be conscientiously good to them, as they are faithful to you) forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in Heaven, neither is there respect of persons with him.*

10. This Consideration should preserve us from Superstition, or thinking to please or satisfy God, win his Favour, or appease his Displeasure, by uncouth Ways, which he hath not prescribed to all Men; to corrupt him by our Sacrifices and Oblations; our flatteries, glozings, colloquings with him; so that he will indulge us in any bad thing, or excuse us from our true Duty, in regard to those affected Services.

We do herein but abuse our selves; for he will not approve or accept us upon any other Account, than of discharging our Duty, being truly righteous and good.

11. It is Matter of Comfort and Satisfaction to a Man, who is conscious of his Sincerity, that (whatever his Condition and Circumstances be) that God will have a fair Regard thereto, and will not reject him.

It was so to Job; *Doth not God see my ways, and count all my steps?—Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know my integrity.*

Job 3. 19. 21.

Gen. 4. 7.

Jam. 1. 9.

O ranevōs.

Prov. 11. 12.

14. 21.

Job 36. 5.

(Jam. 2. 6.)

Quorum satis

calum omne

vacavit. Luc.

lib. 7.

Col. 4. 1.

3. ult.

Eph. 6. 9.

Coloff. 2.—

Mic. 6. 7, 8.

Job 31. 4—6.



Jam. 2. 1, 9.  
Prov. 28. 21.

12. The Consideration of this Point should keep us from partial Respects of Men. Not to admire the State of great Men, nor to yield them undue deferences (in prejudice to meaner Persons, making greater difference than there is ground for) not to flatter or humour them in an immoderate measure, or unbecoming manner.

'Ou μὴν οὐ  
πικρὸν ἴδωκεν.  
Matt. 23. 16.  
Θαυμάζειν  
πρὸς τὸν  
πρόσωπον.  
Jude.

This is that which St. James doth urge in his 2d Chapter; as a very unequal Thing.

Levit. 19. 15.  
Deut. 1. 17.

We should imitate God; we should consider that our Opinions and Affections should resemble his.

Prov. 24. 23.  
16. 5. 28. 21.

As in exterior Judgment no respect is to be had to the rich above the poor; so neither in the interior Judgment or Esteem of our Mind; to which St. James seemeth to apply the Law; *If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and ye are convinced of the law as transgressors.*

Jam. 2. 9.

13. This should keep us from envying at those who have more worldly Advantages.

14. It should keep us from being offended, or scandalized, or perverted into false Notions of God, upon occasion of any mysterious Points, or hard Expressions importing absolute and arbitrary Proceedings of God, in Predestination or Providence. For however they are to be understood, they cannot derogate from the impartial Goodness and Justice of God.

15. This Consideration should engage us readily to pay due Respect and Reverence to Princes, to Magistrates, to all our Superiours.

Rom. 13. 1.

For hence we see, that the Reason why we are commanded to honour and fear them, is, not their worldly Grandeur of Wealth or Power (things of small Consideration with God) but it standeth on a more solid Ground, their sacred Relations to God, as his Representatives and Officers; who in his Name and Behalf do administer Justice, and protect Right and Innocence, encourage Vertue, maintain Order and Peace in the World.

1 Cor. 12. 1.

Though God doth not favour their Persons as rich and mighty; yet he regardeth his own Character imprinted on them, he regardeth his Honour and Interest concerned in their respect, he regardeth the publick Good of Mankind, which they are constituted to promote. He considers them as the *Ministers of his Kingdom*, and Instruments of conveying his Benefits to Mankind.

1 Tim. 2. 1.

Whence he *giveth salvation to Kings*, he by his Law, and by his Providence doth guard and secure them from Violence, from Contempt, from Disrespect.

Rom. 14. 4.  
Els ἀγαθόν

In honouring them, we honour the Authority of God; and the Character of Divinity stamped on them; we serve our selves, for whose sake they are constituted, for whose Good they watch.

It may also engage us the more gladly and fully to yield them their due Respect, to consider, that their Condition is not invidious; or their Case better than other Mens; seeing they are accountable to God for the Advantages of it; seeing that God hath no regard to them upon account of that Greatness which dazzleth our Eyes: Seeing that for all the Burthens they sustain, for all the Cares they take, for all the Pains they endure, for our Good and publick Service, they can receive so inconsiderable a Recompence from us.

Finally,

It should engage us to be very careful of our Ways, and diligent in our Obedience; seeing there is no other way possible of pleasing God, of gaining his Favour and Friendship, of appeasing his Displeasure, of standing upright, and coming off well in his Judgment; this is St. Peter's Inference, with which I conclude;

1 Pet. 1. 17.

*If ye call on the Father, who without respect of Persons judgeth according to every Man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.*



# SERMON XXXIX.

# The Doctrine of Universal Redemption asserted and explained.

1 TIM. IV. 10.

—The living God ; who is the Saviour of all Men, especially of those that believe.

Θεὸν γὰρ πο-  
λὺν ὀνείων, ἐφ'  
ὧν θαυμαζέ-  
ται, εἰδὲν  
ἐπὶ τοῦ ὡς τὸ  
πρόβλεπον εὐε-  
ργησέν ἰδιώτα-  
τον. Naz. O-  
rat. 26.

**T**HERE are Two Points of Doctrine here plainly asserted by St. Paul, which I shall endeavour to explain, and to apply: *One*, that God is the Saviour of all Men; *Another*, that he is peculiarly the Saviour of the faithful. For the *First*,

God in many Respects may truly be conceived and called *the Saviour of all men*; for the Word *save* doth in a large acceptation denote the conferring any kind of good: As implying a removal of Need, or Indigence. Whence God is *the Saviour of all men*, as the universal preserver and upholder of all Things in their Being and natural State, as it is in the Psalm: *Thou, Lord, savest man and beast*, or, as the general Benefactor, who is good to all, and whose mercies are over all his works; who maketh his Sun to rise upon the good and bad, rains upon the just and unjust, is kind and benign even to the ingrateful and evil: Or, as the common assistant, protector, and deliverer of all Men, who in Need or Distress have recourse unto him for Succour and Relief, according to what is said in the Psalms; *The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble: The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him. They cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses.*

In these kinds of Senses especially respecting natural and temporal Good, it is manifest that *God is the Saviour of all men*. But that he is in this Place termed such in a higher Sense, with regard to Mercies and Blessings of a more excellent Kind, and greater Consequence (to Mercies and Blessings of a spiritual Nature, and relating to the eternal State of Men) may from several Considerations appear.

1. For that according to *Apostolical* Use the word *Saviour*, *Save*, *Salvation*, are wont to bear an *Evangelical* Sense, relating to the Benefits by our Lord *Jesus Christ* procured, purchased, and dispensed, concerning the future State of Men.

2. For that questionless *St. Paul* doth here intend *God* to be *Saviour* of the Faithful in this higher Sense, and consequently he means him in the same Sense (although not in the same Degree and Measure, or not altogether to the same Effects and Purposes) a *Saviour of all men.*

3. Because 'tis plain that in other Places of Scripture, like and parallel to this, such a Sense is designed. As, where in this very Epistle, we are enjoined *to pray for all men*, for this reason; For (saith St. Paul) *this is good and acceptable before God our Saviour, who would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge* (or acknowledgment) *of the truth*; where σωτηρ ἡμῶν, the Saviour of us, seems to denote the Saviour of us as men (that Interpretation best suiting with the Argument St. Paul useth) however it is expressed that God is, according to desire or intention, the Saviour of all Men, in reference to their spiritual and eternal Advantage; as willing that all Men should embrace the Gospel; which is farther most evidently confirmed by the Words immediately following; *For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus.*



4. Because according to the tenour of Scripture, and the analogy of Christian Doctrine, St. Paul's assertion thus interpreted is true, as our subsequent Discourse may declare.

5. I might add, That *the living God* in our Text may very well be understood and expounded to be our Lord Jesus himself; not only as partaking of the divine Nature, but as exhibited in the Gospel, the Word incarnate, who as such may seem commonly by St. Paul to be styled, *God our Saviour*; *God manifested in the flesh*; *God, that purchased the Church with his own Blood*; *Christ, who is God over all, blessed for evermore*. However it from the Premises is sufficiently apparent, that God's being *the Saviour of all men* doth relate unto our Saviour Jesus his Undertakings and Performances for the Salvation of all Men; since God in a sense Evangelical is no otherwise said to save, than in concurrence with what Jesus did undertake and perform; than as designing, ordering, accepting, prosecuting and accomplishing our Lord's Performances; Jesus being the Conduit through which all Evangelical Mercies and Blessings are from God convey'd and dispens'd to Mankind. So that God being *the Saviour of Mankind*, is either directly and immediately, or by Equivalence and in Consequence the same with Jesus being *the Saviour of all men*.

That our Lord Jesus is *the Saviour of all men*; or that the most signal of his saving Performances do in their Nature and their Design respect all Men, as meant for, as conducing and tending to all Mens Salvation, yea and as in their own Nature (supposing Men's due and possible Concurrence with them) effectually productive of their Salvation; that I say this ancient Catholic Point of Doctrine (the which we profess to believe, when with the Church we say in the Nicene Creed—*Who for us Men, and for our Salvation came down from Heaven*, and the which particularly our Church in it's Catechism, in the Ministration of Baptism, and in the Communion, doth most evidently and expressly declare it self to embrace) is very true, many full and clear Testimonies of Scripture do shew, many Reasons grounded on Scripture do prove; the which we shall first touch, and then farther both illustrate and enforce the Truth, by declaring upon what Accounts, or in what respects our Lord is the Saviour of all Men; as also by an application to Practice, declarative of its Usefulness and Subserviency to the Purposes of Piety. For immediate Testimonies:

1. Jesus is called the Saviour of the World; who was sent and came into the World to save the World; whose chief Performances were designed and directed to the Salvation of the World; *We have heard and known* (said the Men of Samaria) *that this is truly the Saviour of the World, the Christ*. *We have seen and testified* (saith St. John) *that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the World* (that World, of which it is said: *He was in the World, and the World was made by him, and the World knew him not*.) And; *God sent his Son into the World, not to judge* (or not to condemn) *the World, but that the World by him should be saved* (that World, where of a great Part he in effect would both judge and condemn for Unbelief and Disobedience, he did come primarily upon intent to save.) And, *The bread which I shall give, is* (saith he) *my flesh, which I will give for the life of the World*: And, *Behold* (saith the Baptist) *the Lamb of God which taketh away the Sins of the World*. And, *God was in Christ, reconciling the World unto himself, not imputing their Offences* (saith St. Paul) *to the World*, which otherwise he expresseth by *τὸ πᾶντα*, by him *to reconcile all things unto himself*: ) And, *He is a propitiation not only for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world* (the whole World, in contradiction from all Christians, to whom St. John speaketh in that Place of his Catholic Epistle; that *ἡσμεν ὁλβ.*, of which he saith in that same Epistle, *ἡσμεν ὁλβ. ἐν τῇ πορνείᾳ καὶ τῇ πλεονεξίᾳ*, the whole World lieth in wickedness.) In all which Places that the World according to its ordinary acceptation (and as every Man would take it at first hearing) doth signifie the whole Community of Mankind, comprehending Men of all Sorts and Qualities, good and bad, Believers and Infidels (not in a new, unusual Sense, any special restrained World of some Persons, particularly regarded, or qualified) will, I suppose, easily appear to him, who shall without Prejudice or Partiality attend to the common Use thereof in Scripture, especially in St. John, who most frequently applieth it as to this, so to other Cases, or Matters.

2. The Object of our Saviour's Undertakings and Intentions is described by Qualities and Circumstances agreeing unto all Men. All the Sons of Adam are by Disobedience in a lost Condition (lost in Error and Sin, lost in Guilt and Condemnation,



nation, lost in Trouble and Misery) and, *The Son of Man* (saith *He* himself) *Matt. 18. 11.* came to save, *ἡ ἀπολλυμένη*, that which was lost (or whatever was lost.) *All Men* *Rom. 3. 23.* have sinned, (saith *St. Paul*) and are fallen short of the glory of God; and, 'Tis a *1 Tim. 1. 15.* faithful saying (saith the same Apostle) and worthy of all acceptation, that *Christ Jesus* came into the World to save sinners. God commended his love to us, that we *Rom. 5. 8.* being yet sinners *Christ* died for us. All Men naturally are weak, and wicked; *Ephes. 2. 1.* are in a State of alienation and enmity toward God: And, Even when we were *Rom. 5. 6, 10.* without strength, in due time *Christ* died for the ungodly: When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son: *Christ* once suffered for sins, the *1 Pet. 3. 18.* righteous for the unrighteous. All Men have Souls, and Lives expos'd to Misery and Ruin: And, *The Son of Man* (so he assures us) came not to destroy, but to *Luke 9. 56.* save the souls (or lives) of Men. Those Propositions in form, respecting an indefinite Object, are according to vulgar use equipollent to those, wherein the Object is expressed universally. However,

3. They are interpreted by others, expressed in terms as general, and comprehensive as can be; such as these Texts contain: *The living God, who is the Sa-* *1 Tim. 4. 10.* *viour of all Men, especially of the faithful* (of all Men universally, not only of the faithful, though chiefly of them.) *God our Saviour would have all Men to be sa-* *1 Tim. 2. 4, 5.* *ved; He is the mediator of God and Men, who gave himself a ransom for all Men;* *Rom. 11. 32.* *God hath shut up all Men under sin, that he might have mercy upon all. The love of* *2 Cor. 5. 15.* *Christ constraineth us, judging this, that if one died for all, then are all dead; and he died for all, that they who live may not live to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again. The saving grace of God hath appeared to all men* (or *Tit. 2. 11.* the Grace of God, which is saving to all Men, hath appeared, *ἐπεφάνη ἡ χάρις Θεοῦ ἡ σωτηρία πάντων ἀνθρώπων.*) *He tasted death* *ἑαυτοῦ θάνατον*, for every Man. *He* *Heb. 2. 9, 10.* *is the true light, that enlighteneth every Man coming into the World.* Which Pro- *John 1. 9.* positions do sufficiently determine the Extent of our Saviour's saving Performances.

4. Farther yet, to exclude any limitation or diminution of these so general Terms (at least to exclude any limitation in regard to all the Members of the visible Church, which are or have been incorporated thereinto) it is expressed, that our Saviour's Undertakings did respect even those, who (by their own De- *Ve illu, qui* *faul*) might lose the Benefit of them, and who in effect should not be saved. For, *auctorem pro-* *of those false Teachers, who introduc'd pernicious Heresies, 'tis said, that they de-* *pria salutis* *nied the Lord, who bought them.* And *St. Paul* implies, that by a scandalous Exam- *negaverunt.* *Ambr. Ps. 39.* *ple a weak brother, for whom Christ died, being induced to sin, might be destroyed.* *2 Pet. 2. 1.* *And by thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died.* And, *Do* *1 Cor. 8. 11.* *not* (saith *He* again) *by thy eating destroy him, for whom Christ died.* And, the *Rom. 14. 15.* *Apostle to the Hebrews* signifies concerning Apostates, that they do trample upon *Heb. 10. 29.* *the Son of God, and pollute the Blood of Christ, by which they are sanctified.*

5. The Supposition thereof is the Ground of Duty, and an Aggravation of Sin.

Thus doth the *Holy Scripture* in Terms very direct and express declare this Truth, indeed so clearly and fully, that scarce any other Point of Christian Doctrine can alledge more ample or plain Testimony of Scripture for it; whence it is wonderful, that any pretending Reverence to Scripture should dare (upon Consequences of their own devising) to question it; and many Reasons confirming the same, may be deduced thence.

1. The impulsive Cause, which moved GOD to design the sending our Lord for to undertake what he did is expressed to be *Philanthropy*; or Love to Mankind: But (saith *St. Paul*) when the kindness and love of God our Saviour unto man appeared— *Tit. 3. 4.* *according to his mercy he saved us.* So God loved the World, that he gave his only *ἡ φιλανθρω-* *begotten Son.* God hereby commends his love unto us, that we as yet being sinners, *πία τῆ σωτη-* *Christ died for us.* It was not a particular fondness of Affection (such whereof *εἰς ἡμῶν δεῖ.* *John 3. 16.* *Rom. 5. 8.* *Ephes. 2. 4.* no particular ground can be assigned or imagined) but an universal (infinitely rich and abundant) Goodness, Mercy and Pity toward this eminent Part of his Creation sunk into Distress and lamentable Wretchedness, which induced God to send his Son for the Redemption of Mankind.

2. God declares himself impartial (most particularly) in this Case; that as all Men in regard to him stand alike related, and are in the same Condition, so he proceeds with indifferent Affection, and upon the same Terms with all. He is



equally the Lord and Maker of all Men; and all Men are equally involved in Guilt, and exposed to Ruin; upon which grounds St. Paul inferreth, that as to God's regard of Man's Salvation, there is no Difference between *Jews* and *Greeks*; and by Parity of Reason there can be none between any other Sorts of Persons, antecedently to God's merciful Intentions. *There is* (saith He) *no respect of Persons with God* (as to preparing the Capacities and Means, to propounding the Terms and Conditions of Salvation, for about these he discourses) for, *Is he* (saith the Apostle, assigning the Reason of that assertion) *the God of the Jews only, and not of the Gentiles?* No: *There is no difference* (saith He) *of Jew and Greek, for there is the same Lord of all, being rich* (rich in Mercy and Bounty) *unto all that call upon him*; that is by Consequence simply unto all; for St. Paul implies, that God therefore provided that all Men should have the Means of calling upon him imparted to them; for that, *how should they call upon him without Faith*; and *how should they believe without Preachers, and how should there be Preachers, if they were not sent?* Whence he infers (against the Sense of those Jews, with whom he disputes) that it was necessary that the Apostles should have a Commission to preach unto all. And, *The righteousness of God by the faith of Christ is manifested unto all, and over all that believe, for there is no difference*; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: The relation of God is the same to all Men; (He is the God and Lord of all) the State and Need of all Men are the same; there is therefore no difference, excepting that consequent one, which compliance or non-compliance with the Conditions offered unto all doth induce. 'Tis true in this respect, what the Wise man saith, *ὁ πάντων θεαυτός ὁμοίως περὶ πάντων ἀνθρώπων*. He, that is, Lord of all, careth (or provideth) for all alike; and what Clemens Alexandrinus says, as to this particular, *All things lie equally for all from God; so that no Man can complain of him; as partial to some, and deficient to others.*

3. We may observe, that the Undertakings and Performances of our Lord are for Nature and Extent compared with those of Adam (who was *τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος*, a type of him that was to come;) As Adam, being a representative of Mankind, did by his Transgression involve all Men in Guilt, and subject them to Condemnation; provoked God's Wrath, and drew the Effects thereof upon us; brought all Men under the Slavery of Sin, and Necessity of Death; so was our Lord the Proxy of Mankind, and by his Performances in our Behalf did undo for our Advantage, what the former did to our Prejudice; by his entire Obedience, expiating the common Guilt, suspending the fatal Sentence, pacifying God's Wrath, reducing Righteousness, and restoring Life to all that would embrace them; so doth St. Paul at large (in the 5th Chapter of his Epistle to the Romans) propound and prosecute the Comparison; closing his Discourse thus: *Therefore as by the offence of one man Judgment came upon all Men to condemnation, so by the Righteousness of one, the Free-gift came upon all Men to justification of Life.* As Guilt, Wrath and Death forementioned were the Fruits of what Adam did, falling upon all; so Pardon, Grace and Life were (in design) the Effects of what our Saviour performed relating unto all. Yea, The same Comparison St. Paul seems to intimate in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, where he saith, That if one died for all, then are all Men dead; that is, Christ's dying for all Men, implies all Men in a State of Condemnation and Subjection to Death; and that Inference supposes the Performances of the first and second Adam to be in their Nature and primary Effects co-extended and commensurate. The same St. Paul seemeth in expresse Terms to say, *All Men have sinned, and are fallen short* (or are destitute) *of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace* (or favour) *by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.* (All Men are justified, that is, according to God's favourable Intention and Design.) Yea, the very Reason, why God permitted Sin and Death to prevail so universally is intimated to be his Design of extending a Capacity of Righteousness and Life unto all; so St. Paul tells us: God hath shut up all Men under Sin, that he might have Mercy upon all. And particularly, that by Virtue of Christ's Performances Death is abolished, and Immortality is conferred upon all Men, St. Paul most expressly teacheth us; *For* (saith he) *as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all men be made alive.*

1 Cor. 15. 22.

2 Tim. 1. 10.

Rom. 6. 23.



I observe that *Prosper* (an eager disputant about Points allied to this) several times confesseth, that *Christ* may be most rightly affirmed to have been crucified for the Redemption of the whole World, especially upon two Accounts, for his true Susception of human Nature, and for the common Perdition of all Men in the first Man; we have touched the latter, let us add, That

4. Our Saviour assuming our Nature, and partaking of our Flesh, being made in the likeness of Men, and found in fashion as a Man; yea endued with the Passions and Infirmities of Man's Nature, exposed to the Tribulations and Inconveniences of Man's Life, did thereby allie himself, and put on a fraternal Relation unto all Men. Forasmuch saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, as Children (the Children he means of the same Father, or Brethren; as the Tenour of his Discourse makes evident) are Partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that is, graciously designing to become a Brother to the Children of Men, he assumed all that was proper to Man's Nature. God, saith St. Paul, made *ὡς ἄνθρωπον*, the whole Nation or Race of Men, dwelling upon the face of the earth, of one Blood; and of that one Blood, our Saviour was pleased to take Part, entitling us thereby to a Consanguinity with him; and it was a Title of his, which he seemed to affect and delight in, the Son of Man. He being such did sanctifie our Nature, by the closest Conjunction thereof to the Divine Nature, and rendring it more than a Temple of the Divinity; he dignified it, and (as that Apostle intimateth) advanced it above the angelical Nature by an alliance to God himself; he thereby not only became qualified to mediate between God and Man, and capable to transact that great Business of Man's Salvation; but was engaged, and in a manner obliged to do it; for as he was a Man, he surely was endued with the best of human Affections, universal Charity and Compassion, which would excite him to promote the Welfare of all; as he was a Man, he was subject to the common Law of Humanity, which obliges to endeavour the common Benefit of Men. As he was a Brother in Relation, so he could nor, he would not be otherwise in Affection; he is not to be conceived deficient in Performance of the Offices suitable to that Condition. That good-will which he requires us to bear toward all Men indifferently, good and bad, Friends and Enemies, he questionless did bear himself in the highest Degree, and to the utmost Extent; the general Beneficence, which in his Conversation and Practice he did express, doth signifie how large his Desires and Intentions were in regard to the Welfare of Men; so that we may thence well aver with St. Ambrose: *Incarnationis Dei mysterium est universae salutis creatura*; The mystery of God's Incarnation doth respect the Salvation of all Mankind, according to his Desire and Design.

5. We are taught that our Lord hath by his saving Performances acquired a rightful Propriety in, and a Title of Dominion over all Men living; to him is committed the Governance and Protection of all Mankind, as the reward of what he did and suffered for its sake. He is called the Lord of all Men; and the head of every Man. It is said that all things by his Father are given into his hand, and put under his feet; that power is given him over all flesh; that All Authority is given him in heaven and earth; all Judgment is committed to him. Which Priviledges, Rights, Dignities are declared to have been procured by the Virtue of his saving Performances, and purchased by the Price of his Blood. For, To this end, saith St Paul, *Christ* both died and rose again, and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and living; (or might exercise Lordship over both the dead and the living, *ὡς καὶ νεκρῶν καὶ ζώντων κυριεύων*) and, We are not our own (saith He again) we are bought with a price: And, we see Jesus, for the suffering of death, crown'd with glory and honour, that by the grace of God he might taste death for every man (or, for the suffering of Death, that by God's Grace he might taste Death for every Man, crowned with Glory and Honour; for there seems to be such a trajection in the Words;) And he was obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross there-

*Cum itaque reſiſſime dicatur Saluator pro totius mundi redemptione crucifixus, propter veram naturam humanam ſuſceptionem, & propter communem in primo homine omnium perditionem, &c. Prof. ad Gall. c. 9.*

*Ἡ περὶ αὐτοῦ ὁ σαρκὸς ἐκ ἰδίου λόγος ὅτις κύριος ὄντα, ἀλλὰ μὴ μόνον ἰδιωτικῶς ὡς ἡ γυνὴ παρὰ τὸ λόγον πατρὸς ἀνθρωπότητι, &c. Athan. c. Arr. Orat. 3. p. 385. Heb. 2. 11.*

*Ἀνθρώπων αὐτὸν ποιήσας ὁ πατὴρ ἐκ πάσης ποίησεν ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλ' εἰς τὸ κυριεύσαι πάντων αὐτὸν, καὶ ἀγιάζειν πάντας διὰ τὸ χεῖματι πεποιμένον. Ath. Orat. 3. in Art. 385.*

Apoc. 17. 14. AEs 10. 36.  
1 Cor. 11. 3. Matt. 28. 18.  
Matt. 11. 27.  
John 3. 35. 13. 3.  
Heb. 2. 8. 1. 2.  
John 17. 2. 5. 22.  
Phil. 2. 9. Psal. 110. 7.

Rom. 14. 9.

1 Cor. 6. 20.

Heb. 2. 9.

Phil. 2. 8; 9.

Apoc. 5. 9, 12.







9. Either our Saviour's Performances do respect all Men, or some Men (the far greatest Part of Men) do stand upon no other Terms, than those of the first Creation, or rather of the subsequent Lapse and Condemnation; being subject to an extremely rigorous Law, and an infallibly certain Guilt; and consequently to inevitable Punishment; being utterly secluded from all Capacity of Mercy, and having no Place of Repentance left unto them (the Place of Repentance being a most signal Part of Christ's Purchase) so that if any such Man should, according to the Proportion of his Light and Ability, perform what is agreeable to God's Law, doing what is possible to him (this may be supposed, for what is possible to a Man he may do, what is possible is possible) in order to his Salvation, he notwithstanding should be incapable of any Mercy, Favour or Acceptance. But, beside that it is expressly said, that God did shut up all Men under sin, that he might have mercy upon all; and that we are plainly enough informed, that our Lord did reverse the first fatal Sentence, and hath as the Mediatour between God and Man evacuated all former Covenants by establishing a new one (for if any former Covenant had been good, there had been no place sought for a new one, as the Apostle to the Hebrews discourseth) besides these Considerations, I say, and beside that such Suppositions do not well suit to the Nature of God, and do not well consist with the Tenour of his Providence; God positively and vehemently disclaimeth this Rigour of proceeding; He both under Law and Gospel declares himself ready to admit any Man's Repentance; yea earnestly invites all Men thereto; yea grievously explains and expostulates with Men for not repenting, yea not only says it, but swears it by his own Life, that he desires any wicked Man should do it; He strongly asserts, he earnestly inculcates, he loudly proclaims to all his readiness to pardon, and his delight in shewing mercy; the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering. He declares, that he will exact an Account of Men, according to Proportion, answerable to their willingness to do what they could; and to the Improvements of those Talents (those Measures of Light and Strength) which they had, or might have had; that whoever is *ὁ ἐλαχίστος πιστός*, faithful in using the smallest Power, shall be accepted and rewarded. He represents himself impartial in his Judgment, and acceptance of Men's Persons and Performances; any Man, in any Nation, his sincere, though imperfect, Piety and Righteousness being acceptable to him; The final Ruin of Men is not imputed to any antecedent Defect lying in Man's State, or God's Will, to no Obstacle on God's Part, nor Incapacity on the Part of Man, but wholly to Man's blameable Neglect, or wilful Abuse of the Means conducive to his Salvation: No want of Mercy in God, or Virtue in the Passion of our Lord are to be mentioned or thought of; Infidelity (formal or interpretative) and obstinate Impenitency, disappointing God's merciful Intentions, and frustrating our Lord's saving Performances, and Endeavours, are the sole Banes of Mankind; Here saith our Lord) *is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. And, I speak these things, that ye might be saved; but ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. And, How often have I willed to gather thy children, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but ye would not? Of the Pharisees and Lawyers our Saviour said, That they defeated the counsel of God toward themselves (ἠδυνάσαν τὸν βούλον τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς ἑαυτοὺς) the Counsel of God, who designed to bring them to Repentance by the Instruction and Exhortation of St. John the Baptist. Our Saviour invited many to the Participation of the Gospel (that great Feast of fat things to all people, as the Prophet Esay calleth it) but they would not come, saith the Text; he iterated his Message, but they carelessly neglecting it (ἀπελθοῦσιν) went away, one to his farm, another to his merchandize, and the rest took his Servants, and intreated them spitefully, and slew them. The Sower (our Lord) did sow in the field (the world) the good Seed of heavenly Truth, but some would not admit it into their Heads or Hearts; from others Temptation bare it away; in others worldly Cares and Desires choaked it; Our Lord spake the most convincing Words, such as no Man ever spake, such as drew Publicans and Harlots into the Kingdom of Heaven; He performed most astonishing Works, such as never the like were done, which were sufficient to convert Tyre and Sydon, yea to have preserved Sodom, but without Effect; such were the invincible Obstinacy, the gross Stupidity, the corrupt Prejudices, and perverse Affections of his Auditors and Spectators, upon which Cause our Lord chargeth the Inefficacy and*

Acts 5. 31.  
Luke 24. 47.

Rom. 11. 32.

Heb. 8. 7.

Acts 17. 30.  
Ezek. 18.

Ezek. 33. 11.  
Isa. 55. 3. 7.  
Mic. 7. 8.  
Rom. 2. 4.

2 Cor. 8. 12.  
Matt. 25. 25.

Luke 19. 17.  
16. 10.  
Acts 10. 34.  
1 Pet. 1. 17.

John 3. 19.

John 5. 34. 40.

Matt. 23. 17.

Luke 7. 30.

Esa. 25. 6.

Matt. 22. 3. 5.

Matt. 13. 19.  
38.

John 7. 46. 15.

22. 15. 24. 9.

32.

Matt. 21. 31.

John 7. 31.

John 5. 44.

12. 43.

Luke 16. 14.

Matt. 13. 13.

23. 14.

Unsuc-



Unsuccessfulness of his Endeavours for their Salvation. So doth St. Stephen call the Jews, unto whom the Gospel was offered, *hard-hearted, uncircumcised in heart and ears*; such as did always resist the holy Spirit. St. Paul gives the same Character of them, and assigns the same Cause of their rejecting the Gospel. And of the Jews of Antioch 'tis said, that they did thrust away the word of Salvation, judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life (that is, disdaining to embrace the Overture of everlasting Life made unto them.) And, despising thou the riches of God's goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, being ignorant that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? So St. Paul expostulates with the incredulous Jew. And, How, saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation? So do our Lord and his Apostles state the Reason of Mens miscarrying in this great Affair; signifying all requisite Care and Provision to be made on God's Part for their Salvation; and imputing the Obstruction solely to their voluntary Default of Compliance with God in his Conduct and Management thereof.

Neither are the Dealings and Declarations of God toward those who lived under the Law and Prophets, impertinent to this Purpose; they are applicable upon Consideration of Parity in Reason, or Likeness in Case.

What Remonstrances concerning the gentleness, kindness, and equity of his Dealings, what Exprobrations of their stubbornness and stupidity God did anciently make to Israel under that particular Dispensation (which yet in tendency and in representation may be deemed general) the same he might now use toward all Mankind, under this universal Economy, wherein God hath given to his Son, the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession; whereby all the Kingdoms of the World are become the Kingdoms of the Lord, and his Christ; which hath erected an unconfined Kingdom of Grace; to which all Men in Design and of Right are subject; in respect to which every Nation is in Obligation and Duty become the People of God. What (said God to them) could I have done more to my Vineyard than I have done, wherefore when I looked for grapes did it bring forth wild grapes! O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help. I have spread out my hands all the day-long to a rebellious and gainsaying People. I spake unto you rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; I called, but ye answered not; I have called, and ye have refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded. But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. When I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did chuse that, wherein I delighted not. And, Behold their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken; behold the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach, they have no delight in it. They refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear; yea they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the Law, which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his Spirit. Which Passages, in many others of the like Importance that occur, do imply the large extent of God's merciful Intentions; and the competency of the Means, which God affords for the Salvation of Men; that he wants no Affection or Inclination to save them, that he neglects no means proper for effecting it; that he draws them into the way leading thither, by serious and earnest Invitation, directs them by needful Light and Instruction, excites them by powerful Arguments and Persuasions; and as St. Ambrose speaketh, *Quod in Deo fuit, ostendit omnibus, quod omnes voluit liberare*: God shewed to all, that what was in him, he did will to deliver (or save) all men. Whence he may truly and properly be called the Benefactor and Saviour,

—ἀπολογεῖται μετὰ ἰσχυρίως ὅτι πάντα τὰ εἰς αὐτὸν ἡκούσα ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ τῶν κληνομένων πεποιήκει — (Bas. in Pl. 7.)

even of those, who by their wilful Malice or Neglect do not obtain Salvation. For in respect to the same Favours, which are exhibited and tendered to them, He is the Saviour of those, who by hearkning to God's Call, and complying with God's Design; by well using the Means vouchsafed, and

performing the Conditions required, do finally attain Salvation.

If it be said, that these Transactions do refer only to God's own People, or to those only, unto whom God pleased to dispense especial Revelations of Truth, and Overtures of Mercy; that we therefore cannot thence infer any thing concerning the general Extent of God's Design, or the Vertue of Christ's Performances in respect to all Mankind; we may to this Suggestion rejoyn, that by observing the manner of God's Proceedings toward them, unto whom he openly declareth his

Mind



Mind and Will, we may reasonably collect how he standeth affected toward others, and by what Rules, or upon what Accompts he dealeth with them; taking in the analogy of Reason, and parity or disparity of the Case. As to God's Affection, it is the same every-where, agreeable to that nature, which inclineth him to be good to all, and merciful over all his creatures (as the Psalmist tells us) unto which *Psalm. 135. 9.* disposition his Providence yields attestation; for *in ἀποστολῇ ἀποστολῇ καὶ χάριτι καὶ δυνάμει, he did not leave himself without testimony, doing good to all, as St. Paul tells us; al- Acts 14. 17.* though he doth not dispense his Favours in the same Method, or discover his Meaning by the same Light, or call Men to him with the same Voice and Language.

Neither was Mankind ever left destitute of that *divine Grace*, which (as the good Writer *de vocatione Gentium* saith) never denied it self to any Ages, with the same Vertue, in different measure, with an unchangeable Counsel, and multiform Operation. So in one Place; and in another, *There was always* (saith he) *dispensed to all Men a certain measure of Instruction from above, which although it came from a more occult and sparing Grace, did yet suffice to some for remedy, to all for testimony.*

Comparing the different States of Men, we may substitute with St. Paul, for the law of revelation engraved upon tables, the law of nature written in Mens hearts; for propheticall instructions the dictates of reason; for audible Admonitions and Reproofs, secret whispers of Grace, and checks of Conscience; for extraordinary instances of Divine Power, the ordinary Works of the Creation (by which God's eternal Divinity and Power are discernible) for the *Acts 14. 17.* special and occasional Influences of Providence, the common and continual Expressions of divine Beneficence; then allowing for the Disparity (as to measure of evidence and efficacy) in these things; and as to the rest, the case is the same. If one Part hath means more clear and forcible, yet those which are granted to the other are not void of Use or Vertue; by them all Men in all Places may seek *Acts 17. 27.* God, if haply they may feel him and find him; ye may (as St. Paul implieth) be *Rom. 1. 18,* able to know God, and induced to serve him; to thank him, and to glorify him *20.* in some measure; in a measure answerable to such Light and Strength; no more *Rom. 2. 15,* doth God require, for no more will he reckon with them. If their Helps be *26.* deemed more low and scanty, their Duty in proportion is less high, and their Accompts will be more easy. Enough certainly they have to excuse God from mis- *Rom. 1. 20.* prison of not having provided competently for them, to render them, if they do not well use and improve it, inexcusable; and what they have is an effect of God's Mercy procured and purchased by their Saviour. But of this Point we may have Occasion afterward to say more; I shall now only add; that this suggestion, well considered, may afford another Argument to confirm our Doctrine; which is this.

10. If our Lord be the Saviour of all those to whom God's Truth is declared, and his Mercy offered; or, if he be the Saviour of all the Members of the visible Church; particularly if he be the Saviour of those, who among these, rejecting the Overtures and Means of Grace, or by Disobedience abusing them, shall in the event fail of being saved, then is he the Saviour of all Men. But Our Lord is the Saviour of those Persons; and therefore he is the Saviour of all Men. The Assumption we assayed to shew in the last Argument; and many express Testimonies of Scripture before-mentioned establish it; the common Stile of Scripture doth imply it, when in the Apostolical Writings to all the visibly Faithful indifferently the Relation to Christ as their Saviour is assigned, an interest in all his saving Performances is supposed, the Title of *δικαιοῦμενοι* and *σπουδαζόμενοι* (with others equivalent, of justified, sanctified, regenerated, quickened, &c.) are attributed. And in our Text God is said to be the Saviour chiefly *πιστῶν*, of the faithful; which Word in its common acceptation denotes all visible Members of the Christian Communion. And for its Confirmation we adjoin: The Apostles at first, and the Church ever since after them (except some heterodox People of late) have professed readily to confer holy Baptism, and therein to dispense Remission of Sins, together with other Evangelical Graces and Privileges, to every Man professing his Faith in Christ, and Resolution to observe Christ's Law, upon this Supposition, that Christ

*Gratia Dei nullis seculis se negavit, virtute una, quantitate diversa, concilio incommutabili, opere multiformi. II. 5.*

*Adhibita est semper universis hominibus quidam superna mensura doctrinae, qua etsi occultioris parsiorisque gratia fuit, sufficit tamen quibusdam ad remedium, omnibus ad testimonium. II. 15.*

*Rom. 2. 14, 15.*

*—nulli nationi hominum bonitatis suae dona subtraxit, ut propheticas voces & praecepta legalia convincerentur in elementorum obsequiis, & testimonio acciperent. De Voc. G. I. 5. Rom. 1. 19.*



is the Saviour of all such Persons, and by his salutary Passion hath purchased that Remission for them; although the Dispensers of these Graces could not discern what Decrees God in his secret Providence had passed upon them, or what the event should be as to their final State; yea although according to the Judgment of Prudence they could not but conceive, that all such should not be saved, but that many of them should be of those, who (as the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews* speaketh) *would draw back unto perdition*, who (as *St. Peter* implies some might and would do) would forget the Purgation, which they had received of their Sins. That in thus doing the Church proceeds upon a Persuasion that *Christ* is truly the Saviour of all its visible Members, duly admitted and incorporated thereinto, the thing it self plainly signifies; the tenour of its Practice makes palpable; the Forms of Speech used in its holy Administrations (of Prayers, of Sacraments, of Exhortations) do suppose, or express. For how can each Member singly be asserted in Holy Baptism to be washed from his Sins, and sanctified to God, and made regenerate or adopted into the Number of God's Children, and made partaker of *Christ's* Death? How can Thanksgiving in the common Name, in most general Terms, be offered up for *Christ's* saving Performances? Or the Holy Bread and Cup be imparted to each Communicant as Symbols and Pledges of *Christ's* Charity and Mercy towards him? How can every Christian be instigated to Obedience in gratitude to *Christ*, and those who transgress *Christ's* Laws, upbraided for their Ingratitude toward him; their rejecting, or renouncing, despising, or abusing him and his Salvation? How can such things be said and done with any Truth or Consistency; yea without Forgery and Mockery, if every baptized Christian hath not an Interest in our Lord's Performances; if *Christ* be the Saviour only of an uncertain and unknown Part in the Church? This Consideration of the Churches Practice hath made even the most vehement Assertours of *St. Austin's* Doctrine (strained to the highest Pitch) in the more ancient and modest Times, fully to acknowledge this Position; that *Christ* is the Redeemer of every Member of the visible Church, as appears by this remarkable Decree of the Council of *Valencia* in *France*, (consisting of the Bishops of three Provinces, Favourers of *Godscalus* his Opinions.) *We also do believe it most firmly to be held, that all the Multitude of the Faithful, being regenerated by water and the Holy Spirit, and hereby truly incorporated into the Church, and according to the Apostolical Doctrine baptized into the Death of Christ, is by his blood washed from their sins.* Because there could be no true Regeneration, unless there were made also a true Redemption; since in the Sacraments of the Church there is nothing empty (or vain) nothing ludibrious; but all thoroughly true, and supported by its own very truth and sincerity. Yet that out of the very Company of Believers and the Redeemed, some are eternally saved, because by God's Grace they faithfully abide in their Redemption, bearing the Lord's Speech in their Hearts, *He that perseveres to the end shall be saved*; and that others, because they would not abide in the Salvation of the Faith, which they at first received, and did rather chuse to frustrate the Grace of Redemption by evil Doctrine or Life, than to keep it, do no-wise arrive to the Plenitude of Salvation, and to the Perception of eternal Beatitude. 'Tis then a Catholick and True Doctrine, that at least *Christ* is a Saviour of all appearing-Christians; and supposing the Truth thereof, I say that by consequence he is also the Saviour of all Men. For it appeareth thence, that the Design of our Saviour's Performances did not flow from, or was not grounded upon any special Love, or any absolute Decree concerning those Persons who in event shall be saved; since according to that supposition it extendeth to many others; wherefore it proceeded from God's natural Goodness, and common kind Affection toward Mankind; from the Compassion of a gracious Creatour toward his miserable Creature, whence all Men are concerned and interested therein. Why God's merciful Intentions were not explicitly declared and propounded to *Socrates* and *Epictetus*, as they were to *Judas Iscariot* and *Simon Magus*, is another Question, which we may afterward in some manner assail; at present, it suffices to say, that the Overture of Mercy made to such Wretches doth argue God's kind Disposition and good Intention toward all Men; so it did in *St. Ambrose* his Opinion; who says, That our Lord ought not to pass by the Man who should betray him, that all Men might take Notice, that in the Choice even of his Traytour, he did hold forth a Pledge or Mark of all Mens being to be saved.

*Et ideo nec proditorum debuit praeferre, ut adverterent omnes, quod in electione etiam proditoris sui servandum omnium in se praeferat. Ambr. de parad. 8.*

But







Acts 16. 17.  
Karafynus  
on 658i owtu  
eias. —  
1 Cor. 1. 18.  
Acts 2. 47.  
Apoc. 21. 29.  
Eph. 2. 5.  
2 Tim. 1. 9.  
1 Cor. 15. 2.  
Tit. 3. 8.  
1 Pet. 3. 21.  
2 Pet. 2. 22.  
Rom. 13. 11.

fused, than if it were accepted; as he that opens the Prison is to be stiled a Deliverer, although the Captive will not go forth; as he that ministers an effectual Remedy, although the Patient will not use it, deserves the Honour and Thanks due to a Physician; so is our Lord in regard to what he hath performed for Men, and offered to them (being sufficient to prevent their Misery, and promote their Happiness) to be worthily deemed, and thankfully acknowledged their Saviour, although not all Men, yea although not one Man should receive the designed Benefit. Accordingly we may observe, that in the Scripture-stile, those Persons are said to be saved, who are only in a way toward Salvation, although they do not arrive thither; and the Means conducing to Salvation are said to save, although their Effect may be defeated; σωζομενοι and σωσμενοι are Terms applied to all Christians, and Christ is ὁ σῶν, he that hath saved them; and Faith is said to have saved them, although some of them εἰνὲν ἐνέστανται, have believed in vain, or to no effect, forsaking and renouncing their Faith; and Baptism saves them who partake it, although being washed, they return to their wallowing in the Mire. And as our Lord is so termed a Saviour in respect to them, who are by Faith and Admission into the Church, put into a more near Capacity of Salvation, as St. Paul speaketh: ἐγγύτερον ἡμῶν ἡ σωτηρία ἢ ὅταν ἐνέστανται (Now is our Salvation nearer than when we believed;) so is he in respect of all those, who are in any Capacity thereof, although a more remote one.

Clem. Alex.  
Padag.

But let us now view more nearly and distinctly the Respects in which he is a Saviour of all Men, or the particular Benefits and Advantages conducing to Salvation, which by his Performances accrue to Mankind; for ἀποδοὺ τῆς σωτηρίας ἀνάσσει καὶ ἐν ἀνθρώποις, In very many ways he bestoweth Salvation upon all mankind, as Clemens Alexandrinus speaks.

Matt. 3. 17.  
12. 18.

Luke 2. 10. 14.

Col. 1. 20.

Eph. 1. 10.

2 Cor. 5. 29.

Rom. 5.

1 Tim. 2. 4.

2 Pet. 3. 9.

Heb. 6. 16. 18.

Ezek. 33. 11.

2 Cor. 5.

1. Our Lord is the Saviour of all Men, as having effected that Almighty God (who upon great Provocations was justly displeased and angry with Man, who had averted his Face, and withdrawn his Favour from Mankind, whom our Apostasy and Rebellion had rendred a Stranger and an Enemy to us) hath deposed his Wrath toward Mankind, hath conceived a kind Affection to it, doth cast a favourable Aspect upon it; being thoroughly reconciled and made a Friend thereto by our Saviour's Mediation. This is my beloved Son, ἐν τῷ ἰουδύκῳ, in whom I have been well pleased, was the Attestation given from God to our Lord; the meaning whereof in regard to Men, the holy Choir of Angels did interpret, when after the gladfome Report of his Birth (that great joy, which should be to all people) they sang, Glory be to God on high, on Earth Peace, Good-will toward Men. Which St. Paul farther declareth, when he saith, That by him ἰουδύκῳ, God pleased to reconcile unto himself all Things, upon Earth, and in Heaven; and when he saith, That God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their sins. And, When we were enemies (saith he again) we were reconciled to God by the death of his son: When we were enemies, that implies God antecedently to any Man's Conversion to have been appeased, and become favourably disposed toward all Men, or toward those whom St. Paul speaketh unto, as Men; so the reason of the Case doth import, and so the Analogy which St. Paul immediately after propounds between the Results of Adam's Transgression and our Saviour's Obedience (as to Provocation and Reconciliation, to Condemnation and Absolution, to the intents of bringing Death and Life upon all Men) doth enforce. Whence it is, that God declareth himself now to bear an universal good-will to Mankind, that he doth earnestly desire the Welfare of all Men, and is displeased with the Ruin of any Man; that he would have all Men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, because there is one Mediatour between God and Man; that he would not have any perish, but that all should come to repentance; this he affirms, yea (for the Confirmation of our Faith and our Consolation therein) he in the Evangelical Prophet swears it, As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. So far toward our Salvation is done, God meets us half way; he is reconciled unto us, it remains only that we be reconciled to him; that we hearken to the Embassy from him: Be reconciled to God.

2. Jesus is the Saviour of all Men, by satisfying the divine Justice, and repairing God's Honour in their Behalf. The disloyal and ingrateful Behaviour of Man had so wrong'd, so endamaged, so dishonour'd God (had so abused the Goodness,



ness, disparaged the Wisdom, slighted the Power, impeached and surr'd the Authority of his Creator, had so prejudiced all the Rights and Interests of God) that by the divine Wisdom it was thought fit, that he should not be restored into a Capacity of Mercy and Favour, without a signal Compensation made, and an exemplary Punishment undergone, whereby the Right of God should conspicuously be asserted, his love of Goodness and dislike of Wickedness should be remarkably demonstrated, and every Creature in Heaven and Earth should be solemnly admonished of its Duty ; of the Reverence and Obedience it owes to the great Creator, of the heinous Guilt and horrible Mischief it incurs by offending him. Such a Compensation Man was no wise able to make, or fit to undergo such a Punishment : Our Saviour therefore, out of infinite Pity and Charity, did undertake both ; by a voluntary Condescension putting himself into the low and weak State of Man ; subjecting himself unto that Law which Man was obliged unto, and suffering the Pains which Man had deserved. This he was pleased to do in Man's Behalf, and in our stead ; and God was pleased to accept it as so done. His Incarnation (or Exinanition of himself, as St. Paul calleth it) was an Act of that high Duty and Goodness, that it in Virtue surpassed all the Obedience, which all Creatures were able to render ; that it yielded God more Satisfaction and more Honour than the joint Endeavours of all the World could confer. His with so intense Charity and Cheerfulness fulfilling all Righteousness did far more please God, than all our most exact Obedience could have done ; his enduring bitter Pains and Disgraces (considering the infinite Dignity of his Person, his near Relation and Dearness to God, his perfect Innocence and Rectitude, yea his immense Charity, Contentedness and Patience) more than countervailed the Punishment due to the Sins of all Men. Such a Payment was more than served to discharge all our Debts (it serv'd to purchase an Overplus of Graces and Blessings) so rich a Price was more than sufficient to ransom all the World from Captivity ; so goodly, so pure, so sweet, so precious a Sacrifice might worthily expiate and atone all the Guilts of Men.

Now if we enquire what our Saviour did redeem, the Consideration of what he paid, may (as St. Austin tells) help to inform us; *Quæritis quid emerit? videte quid dederit, & invenite quid emerit.* Do ye see (saith he) what he bought? See what he gave, and find what he bought. However, that as the Value and Sufficiency of our Lord's Performances, so the Design and Effect thereof did reach so far in regard to Man; that his Charity was no less extensive than his Performance was complete, for our good, the holy Scripture teaches us. For, *He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world* (saith the Baptist.) And, *The bread* (saith he) *which I gave is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.* And, *He is a propitiation* (saith St. John) *for our sins; and not only for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world.* And, *He is the Mediatour of God and Man, who gave himself ἀντίδοτον ὑπὲρ πάντων, a ransom, in the stead, and for all Men* (saith St. Paul.) And, *He tasted death for every one* (saith the Author to the Hebrews.) And, *He was that one Man, who, as it was expedient, did dye for the whole Nation of Men.* And, *God was in him reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their sins.* And, *He came into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might by him be saved* (or freed from Condemnation.) And, *As by the offence of one man judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one mercy came upon all to justification of life.* The end we see of our Saviour's Performances was, that he might wipe off the Guilt of Sin from all Mankind, that he might reverse the Condemnation passed thereupon, and that he might remove the Punishment due thereto; or, that absolving the first Man's Sin, he might take it away from the whole Race (as St. Athanasius speaks.)

*All Men have sinned, and come short (or are destitute) of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace, by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us. He was born under the Law, that he might redeem those which were under the Law. He that knew no sin, was made sin (was punished and dealt with as a Sinner) that we might*

Λοιπὸν δ' οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἐκίτε (C) τὰ  
ἴδια παρὰ μῆσιν, ἀμαρτωλοὶ ἔκχεοι  
ἀνὰ τὴν τῆς αὐτοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἀναστροφῆς  
ἀδελφῶν ἔκχεοι καὶ διαμύσιν. A-  
than. in Arian. Orat. 4. 485.

Τότε δὲ ὁ δαίμων, ὃς καταδύει ἐν  
τοῖς δαίμονις κατεχόμενοις τὸ ἰδίωμα  
τῶν θεληματινῶν, ἐν τῷ χηρῷ  
τοῦ αἰματωτοῦ τοῦ σωτῆρος προσφιλῶς  
ὣς, Chryf. in John 1. 14.  
Phil. 2. 7.

Ἡ ἔκθεσις παρουσιάζει τὴν σωτηρίαν ὡς  
καὶ τὴν λύτρωσιν καὶ ἡλίσιως θάλας σωτηρίας  
γίγνεται. Athan. ad Adelp. Ep.

*Vide Cyrill. in  
Eph. Conc.*

Διευκρινισθη τῇ  
ἀντιρροπῇ πρὸς  
σιν, ὅτι.

7 Eph. 5. 24

Heb. 10. 10.

9. 13.

1 Pet. 1. 10.

Aug. in Psal. 96.  
Μὴ θανάτῳς εἰ κόσμῳ ὅλῳ ἰλυ-  
σθῶσι· εἰ γὰρ ἡ ἀνθρώπων ψυχὴ, ἀπὸ  
τῆς τοῦ κόσμου, ὁ ἰσχυροὶ τῶν ἰσχυρῶν. Cyrill. Cat. 13.

John 1:20

653

John 3: 2.

1 Tim. 3. 5

• Heb. 2. 9.

1991

S John 11. 50.

18. 14.

3. 17.

2 Rom. 5. 17.

Tr. Inc. 2nd edn. vol.

ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΝ

**ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ ΑΝΤΙΣΤΑΣΙΑΣ**

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३०५ अलङ्कारादयः



be made the righteousness of God in him; (that we might be capable of being esteemed and dealt with as righteous by God upon this Account.) So that the Result is, Divine Justice being fully satisfied, and the Honour of God fully repaired (in regard to all Sins past and future) the Mouth of Vengeance being stopped, the Claims of Death and Hell being evacuated, that general Sentence of Condemnation (pass'd upon all the Sons of Adam) is suspended, Death ceases to reign by any just

2 Tim. 1. 10. Power, or inevitable Necessity; (it is, as St. Paul saith, abolished or abrogated as to any lawful Right, or necessary Force it hath) the Rigour and Severity of that Law, which upon pain of Death exacteth most punctual Obedience (and which consequently doth expose all Men to unavoidable Condemnation) is tempered and abated, a Foundation is laid for the shewing Mercy, and granting Pardon. In Rom. 10. 4. respect whereto,

3. Our Lord is the Saviour of all Men, as having in the Behalf of Mankind transacted and ratified a new Covenant, very necessary for, and very conducive to the Salvation of Mankind; whereby Salvation is made attainable, and is really tendred unto all, upon feasible and equal Conditions. According to the Purport whereof upon any Man (however stained or loaded with the Guilt of most heinous Transgressions) his embracing the Overtures thereof, consenting to, and complying with the Terms propounded therein, that is, sincerely believing, and seriously repenting; returning to God with hearty Desires and earnest Resolutions to serve him; God is ready to dispense Mercy and Pardon, and immediately receiveth the Person into Grace and Favour with him; yea, the Man continuing to perform a faithful (though imperfect) Obedience, an Obedience suitable to Man's natural Infirmary and Frailty, and proportionable to the Assistances afforded him; God farther promiseth to bestow inestimable Blessings and Rewards of Joy and Happiness. That Covenant which the Prophets implied of old, when (beside, and beyond what the Jewish Law did import) they Preached thus, --- *Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings, cease to do evil --- though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool.* And, *Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon;* And, *If the wicked man will turn from all his sins, that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.* (So God in *Ezra* and *Ezekiel* declareth his intention to proceed with Men, avowing that way of his to be most equal and fair.) This is that Covenant which our Lord commanded his Apostles to declare and propound to all

Mark 16. 25. Mankind; Go ye (saith he to them) into the whole world, and preach the doctrine to every creature; that Gospel, according to which, as it is expressed in St. Luke, *repentance and remission ought to be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem;* in respect to which, St. Peter says, that God hath exalted our Lord to be a Prince

Acts 5. 31. and a Saviour, to grant repentance to Israel, and remission of sins; (to grant repentance, that is, (as the Apostle to the Hebrews and Clemens Romanus speak) *μετανοίας τόπον*, room for Repentance, or capacity to receive Pardon upon Repentance) concerning which Covenant that Clemens (the Fellow-labourer of St. Paul, and whom Clemens

Phil. 4. 3. *Θαυμασία* Euseb. *Εν παλαιοῖς ἐκκλησιαστικαῖς* Euseb. *Alexandrinus* calleth an Apostle) in that excellent, admirable and almost Canonical Epistle to the Corinthians, which (as Eusebius and Hierome tell us) was anciently publicly read in most Churches, hath these remarkably full and clear Expressions; Let us (saith he) look stedfastly upon the blood of Christ, and let us see how precious to God his blood is, which being shed for our salvation, did bring the grace of repentance to the whole world. Let us attentively regard all ages, and observe that in every generation the Lord granted place of repentance to them who would turn unto him. This is that new and better Covenant, established upon better promises (cancelling all former, exceptionable, imperfect and ineffectual Compacts, referring to Man's

*\*Ατενίσταμεν εἰς τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὃ ἴδωμεν ὡς ὅτι τίμιον τὸ θεοῦ αἷμα αὐτοῦ, ὅτι διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν ἐκχυθὲν, παρ' ἧς ὁ κόσμος μετανοίας χάριν ἔσται. Ατενίσταμεν εἰς ἡμέρας πάσας, καὶ καταμαθώμεν ὅτι ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἢ ἡμέρᾳ μετανοίας τόπον ἔδωκεν ὁ θεὸς τοῖς βρομομένοις ἐπιστρέφειν εἰς αὐτόν. Clem. ad Corinth.*

Heb. 8. 6. 9. Interest and Duty) about which the Apostle to the Hebrews discourseth, and where- of he calleth our Lord the Mediator and Sponsor; in regard to which St. Paul calleth

15. 12. 24. 7. him the Mediator between God and Man; plainly declaring all Men to have a Concernment and Interest therein; for this Supposition he useth as an Argument

2 Cor. 3. 6. proving God's universal Desire of Man's Conversion and Salvation: *Who would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and*



one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. By virtue of which Covenant it is, that any such degrees of Love or Fear toward God (such as Men are capable of) are available, any righteous Performances, such as our Weakness can produce, are acceptable, any honest Endeavours do receive Countenance and Encouragement; and that (as St. Peter observed) *in every Nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted by him*; although his Fear of God be not so intense, or pure: his Righteousness not so exact and unblameable, as according to extremity of Law and Duty, they should be. From which Covenant so far as is any Man, according to God's intention and desire, from being excluded, that all Men are seriously invited, vehemently exhorted, earnestly intreated to enter into it, and to partake the Benefits exhibited thereby. Every Man that seeleth himself to want those Benefits, and is desirous of Mercy and Ease from the Guilt and Burthen of his Sins, may come and welcome. *Hoe every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters*; So the Evangelical Prophet proclaims; and, *If any man thirsteth, let him come to me and drink*, crieth our Lord; and, *Come to me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest*. (Δεῦν πάντες, Come all to me: All Men therefore (saith Origen) who from the Nature of Sin do labour and are burthened, are called to that Rest; which is with the Word of God.) And, *in Christ's name* (saith St. Paul) *we are Embassadors, as that God by us intreateth, we pray for Christ be reconciled to God*; the purport of which Embassy, together with its extent, he elsewhere thus expresseth, *ταῦν παρ' ἡμῶν τῆς ἀνθρώπων πρὸς πατέρα παρακαλῶν, He now proclaimeth to all men everywhere that they should repent*; he consequently holds forth to all the Benefits annexed to Repentance. But of this we spake formerly.

4. Our Lord Jesus is the Saviour of all men, as having purchased and procured for them competent Aids, whereby they are enabled to perform the Conditions required of them in order to their Salvation; to acquire a sufficient Knowledge of their Duty, to subdue their bad Inclinations and Lusts, to withstand Temptations; or briefly, whereby they are enabled sincerely to repent of their Sins, and acceptably to perform their due Obedience. The Truth of this Point, taking in the Consideration of Man's natural State, may by good Consequence be infer'd from the Truth of the Points foregoing. If Men are naturally so dead in Trespasses and Sins, so enslaved and sold under Sin; so very prone to evil, and averse to good; so dark and blind that they cannot well discern what they should do, so corrupt and weak that they cannot perform what they know and confess to be good (as St. Paul affirmeth Men to be) and consequently are of themselves indisposed to perform the Duties acceptable to God, and requisite by his appointment toward their Salvation, then either our Lord hath provided for them a Communication of Grace sufficient to countervail or surmount that natural Impotency, or all his Designs for their Good are imperfect or inconsistent (aiming at an End, without proving requisite Means, or removing necessary Obstructions) and his Performances, whereby the forementioned Benefits were procured, do prove ineffectual and fruitless. For God being appeased, and become well-affected to Man's Salvation, divine Justice being satisfied, the Rigour of Law being mitigated, Repentance being made available, and an Obedience, agreeable to Man's frailty, becoming acceptable, with all other the immediate results of our Saviour's Transactions for Man, would signify nothing in regard to him, who still lieth under a necessity of Sinning, or an inability of performing that which is indispensibly exacted from him toward a complete Enjoyment of those Benefits and Favours. In vain is the Debt paid, and the Bond cancell'd, and the Prison set open, and Liberty proclaimed, and the Prisoner called forth, if he be not himself able to knock off the Fetters which detain him, and there is no help afforded, by which he may do it. But our Lord hath surely laid his Designs more advisedly, and hath prosecuted his Work more perfectly. Wherefore we may suppose that a Competency of Grace and spiritual Assistance is by virtue of our Saviour's Performances really imparted to every Man, qualifying him to do what God requires, and is ready to accept from him in order to his Welfare; that our Saviour hath sent abroad his Holy Spirit (that Fountain of all true

*Quo diffunditur nullum hominem secundum naturam esse pollutum, sed equaliter omnes ad Christi Evangelium provocari. Hier. ad Aug. Epist. XL.*

*Abs. 10. 34.*

*John 7. 37.*

*Matt. 11. 28.*

*Isa. 55. 1.*

*John 7. 37.*

*Matt. 11. 28.*

*Isa. 55. 1.*

*John 7. 37.*

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*Matt. 11. 28.*

*Isa. 55. 1.*

*John 7. 37.*

*Matt. 11. 28.*

*Isa. 55. 1.*



true Goodness, of all spiritual Light, Strength, and Comfort) like the Sun, to shine, to warm, to dispense benign Influences over the World; although it shineth not so brightly and vigorously, and its presence is not so visible and sensible in one Place as another; which Holy Spirit, as it is in its Essence omnipresent, so it is likewise in its Energy incessantly working (in reasonable measure, right manner, and fit season, as wisdom ordereth) upon the Minds and Affections of Men, infusing good Thoughts and Motions, impressing Arguments and Motives to good Practice, cherishing and promoting good Purposes; checking bad Designs, restraining and reclaiming from bad Courses. Our Reason, however aided by exterior Instruction and Excitement, being unable to deal with those mighty Temptations, Oppositions and Discouragements we are to encounter with, he hath given us a wise and powerful Spirit, to guide and advise us, to excite and encourage us, to relieve and succour us in all our religious Practice and spiritual Warfare. So that all Deliverance from the Prevalency of Temptation and Sin we owe to his Grace and Assistance. That to these Purposes the Holy Spirit is plentifully conferred upon all the visible Members of the Christian Church we have plainly declared in Scripture; It was a Promise concerning the Evangelical Times, that God would pour forth his Spirit upon all flesh; The Collation thereof is a main Part of the Evangelical Covenant (into a Participation of which every Christian is admitted) it being the Finger of God whereby God's Law is impressed upon their inward Parts, and engraven in their Hearts (as the Prophets describe the effects of this Covenant.) And the End of our Saviour's Passion is by St. Paul declared to be, *that the blessing of Abraham might come unto the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit by faith*; that is, that becoming Christians we might partake thereof. And the Apostolical Ministry (that is, preaching the Gospel, and dispensing the Privileges thereof) is therefore styled, *διακονία πνεύματος*, the ministry of the Spirit. And the *tasting of the heavenly gift, and partaking the Holy Ghost* is (according to the Apostle to the Hebrews) part of the Character of a visible Christian (such a Christian, who might *ἀποστασέω*, fall away, as he supposeth, and re-crucify the Lord, and expose him to shame;) and St. Peter makes reception of the Holy Ghost to be a concomitant or consequent of Baptism; Repent, saith he, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise (or that promise of the Spirit, which is called, the spirit of promise, peculiar to the Gospel) is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. (That is, the Holy Spirit is promised to all, how far distant soever in Time or Place, who shall be invited unto, and shall embrace Christianity;) and accordingly, St. Paul saith of Christians, that God according to his mercy hath saved us by the laver of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. And, Know ye not (saith he to the Corinthians) that ye are the temple of God; and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? (that is, Do ye not understand this to be a common Property and Privilege of Christians, such as ye profess your selves to be?) And the Union of all Christians into one body, doth, according to St. Paul, result from this one Spirit, as a common Soul imparted to them all, inanimating and actuating the whole Body, and every Member thereof. For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free, and have been all made to drink of one spirit. And it hath been the Doctrine constantly with general Consent delivered in and by the Catholick Church, that to all Persons, by the holy Mystery of Baptism duly initiated into Christianity, and admitted into the Communion of Christ's Body, the Grace of the Holy Spirit is communicated, enabling them to perform the Conditions of Piety and Vertue which they undertake; and continually watching over them for Accomplishment of those Purposes; which Spirit they are admonished not to resist, to abuse, to grieve, to quench; but to use it well, and improve its Grace to the working out their Salvation. Thus much concerning the Result of our Saviour's Performances, in this kind, in respect to the Community of Christians, we learn from the Holy Scripture and Ecclesiastical Tradition interpreting it; whence we may discern, that the Communications of Grace do not always flow from any special Love or absolute Decree concerning Men, but do commonly proceed from the general Kindness and Mercy of God, by our Lord procured for Mankind; and consequently we may thence collect, that somewhat of this Nature is to the same Purpose, from the same Source, and

Τὸ πνεῦμα  
 ἐκπορεύεται  
 ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς  
 καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ  
 καὶ συνετάσσεται  
 τὰς ἐκκλησιᾶς  
 Clem. Alex.  
 Strom. VII.  
 p. 523.

Joel 2. 28.  
 Acts 2. 28.

Jer. 31. 33.  
 Ezek. 11. 19.  
 Heb. 8. 11.  
 2 Cor. 3. 3.  
 Gal. 3. 14.

1 Cor. 3. 8.  
 1 Thess. 2. 3.

Heb. 6. 4, 5.

Acts 2. 38.

Eph. 1. 13.

Tit. 3. 4.

1 Cor. 3. 16.

2 Cor. 12. 13.

Eph. 4. 30.

1 Cor. 12. 7.

Phil. 2. 13.



and upon the same Account, also granted and dispensed to others. Unto Christians indeed this great Benefit (for the Reward, the Encouragement, the Support of their Faith; and for promoting their Obedience, who are in a nearer Capacity and more immediate Tendency to Salvation) is in a more plentiful Measure, and a more conspicuous Manner dispensed; but that besides that Dispensation, there have been other (not so plainly signified, or expressly promised, yet really imparted) Communications of Grace, in virtue of our Saviour's Merits, there are (beside the main Reason alledged, inferring it from our Lord's being the Saviour of all Men) divers good inducements to believe. For even those Christians to whom upon their Faith the Holy Spirit is promised and bestowed, are by previous Operations of God's Grace (opening their Minds, inclining their Heart, and tempering their Affections) induced to embrace Christianity, Faith itself being a Gift of God, and a Fruit of the Holy Spirit.

And before our Saviour's coming all good Men have thereby been instructed and enabled to do well. And before any special Revelation made, or any particular Covenant enacted (before the enclosure of a particular People or Church, the confinement of God's extraordinary Presence and Providence to one Place) divine Grace appears diffused over several Nations, being watchful in guiding and moving Men to good, and withdrawing them from evil; neither is there Reason why such an appropriation of special Graces and Blessings (upon special Reasons) unto some should be conceived to limit or contract God's general Favour, or to withdraw his ordinary Graces from others. God surely (*who is, πλεῖστον ἐν εὐθείᾳ*, Eph. 2. 4. *rich in mercy*; yea, hath ὑπερβαλλούσα πλῆθος χάριτος, excessive riches of grace,) is not so poor or parsimonious, that being liberal to some should render him sparing toward others; his Grace is not like the Sea, which if it overflow upon one Shore, must therefore retire from another; if it grow deep in one Place, must become shallower in another.

Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? It is a Question in \*Micah; And, Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? is another Question in Esay: No; The Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, nor his ear heavy, that it cannot hear; at any time, in any Place; he is no less able, no less ready than he ever was to afford help to his poor Creatures, where-ever it is needful or opportune. As there was of old an Abimelech among the Philistines, whom God by special warning deterr'd from Commission of Sin; a divine Melchisedeck among the Canaanites; a discreet and honest Jethro in Midian; a very religious and virtuous Job in Arabia; who by complying with God's Grace, did evidence the Communication thereof in several Nations; so it is not unreasonable to suppose the like Cause now, although we cannot by like attestation certify concerning the particular Effects thereof. We may at least discern and shew very conspicuous Footsteps of divine Grace, working in Part, and producing no despicable Fruits of moral Vertue, of Justice and Honesty, Temperance and Sobriety, Benignity and Bounty, Courage and Constancy in worthy Enterprises, Meekness, Patience, Clemency, Modesty; Prudence and Discretion; yea, of Piety and Devotion in some manner, even among Pagans, which if we do not allow to have been in all respects so complete, as to instate the Persons endowed with them, or Practicers of them in God's Favour, or to bring them to Salvation; yet those Qualities and Actions (in degree, or in matter at least, so good, and so conformable to God's Law) we can hardly deny to have been the Gifts of God, and the Effects of divine Grace; they at least themselves acknowledged so much; (for, Nulla sine Deo mens bona est, No mind is good without God, said Seneca; and, οὐκ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ ἀγαθὰ γίνεται, Vir-tue appears to proceed from a divine dispensation to them who partake of it, said Socrates) and, αἱ ἀρεταὶ φύσεις, ἀποφύονται καὶ ἐν μέλει καὶ ἐν ἀγασσιν ἀρετῇ, πρὸς τὴν ἐσχάτην μετάνοιαν καὶ σωτηρίαν, δεόνται ξυμμετρικῶς τοῦ καὶ ζυμμιότου. ὁ δὲ τὸ πᾶν καὶ κρείττω ποτὶς καὶ χεειρώτερος. The best natured Souls being constituted in the middle between the highest vertue and extreme wickedness, do need God to be their succourer and

Eph. 2. 8.  
Gal. 5. 22.  
Luke 24. 49.  
Matt. 16. 17.  
John 16. 12.  
1 Cor. 12. 3.

Ex quo perspicuum fit naturā omnibus inesse Dei notitiam, nec quēquam sine Christo nasci, & non habere semina in se sapientia, iustitia, reliquarumque virtutum. Unde multi absque fide, & Evangelio Christi vel sapienter faciunt aliqua vel sancte, &c. Hier. in Galat. 1.

Eph. 2. 4.  
2. 7.

Secundum Scripturam credimus & plūssimè confitemur, quod nunquam universitati hominum divina providentia cura defuerit. Quem licet exceptum sibi populum specialibz ad pietatem direxeris institutis, nulli tamen nationi hominum bonitatis suae dona subtraxit, &c. De Vocat. Gen. 1. 5.  
\* Mic. 2. 7. Isa. 50. 2. 59. 1.

Gen. 22. 3.  
26. 8.

Exod. 18.

Kαὶ ἐὰν μὴ ἰδικαίαι πόλεις ἢ φιλοσοφίας ἔτις ἐμνήνας.

Mortalem vitam honestare possunt, aternam conferre non possunt. Prosper in Collat. cap. 26.

(Prodesse ad salutem. Aug. Prosper, Fulgent. &c.)

Nemo vir magnus sine aliquo afflatu divino unquam fuit. Cic. de Nat. deorum II. sub fin.

Sen. Epist. 73.  
—Quae secundum iustitiam regulam non solum vituperare non possumus, sed etiam merito restique laudamus. Plat. Menon. fine.  
Aug. de sp. & lit. 27.

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assistent in the inclining and leading them to the better side; faith *Max. Tyr. XXII.* St. *Austin* himself, who seems the least favourable in his Judgment concerning their Actions and State, who calls their Virtues but Images and Shadows of Virtue (*non veras, sed verisimiles*) splendid Sins; acknowledges those virtuous Dispositions and Deeds to be the Gifts of God, to be laudable to procure some Reward, to avail so far, that they, because of them, shall receive a more tolerable and mild Treatment from divine Justice; which Things considered, such Persons do at least by virtue of Grace imparted to them, obtain some Part of Salvation, or an imperfect kind of Salvation, which they owe to our Lord, and in regard whereto he may be called in a sort their *Saviour*.

*Tolerabilius puniuntur. Minus Fabricius quam Catilina puniuntur, &c.—non veras virtutes habendo, sed à veris virtutibus non plurimum deviando. Aug.*

But although the Torrent of natural Pravity hath prevailed so far, as that we cannot assign, or nominate any (among those, who have lived out of the Pale) who certainly or probably have obtained Salvation, yet doth it not follow thence that a sufficient Grace was wanting to them. The most uni-

versal Practice contrary to the Intents of Grace doth not evince a defect of Graces. For we see that the same Cause hath in a manner universally overborn and defeated other Means and Methods designed and dispensed by God for the Instruction and Emendation of Mankind.

Gen. 6. 3.  
1 Pet. 3. 20.  
Neh. 9. 20.

Isa. 5. 4.  
Psalm. 14.  
Rom. 1. 21.

1 Kings 19.  
14. 16.

Psalm. 145. 9.

Psalm. 25. 8.

God's Spirit did long strive with the Inhabitants of the *old World*; yet no more than one Family was bettered, or saved thereby. God by his good Spirit instructed the *Israelites* in the Wilderness (as *Nehemiah* saith) yet no more than two Persons did get into *Canaan*: That People afterward had afforded to them great Advantages of Knowledge and Excitements to Piety; (so that God intimates, that he could not have done more for them, in that regard than he had done.) Yet, *There is none that understandeth, or seeketh after God*, was a Complaint in the best Times. The *Pagans* had the means of knowing God, as St. *Paul* affirmeth, yet generally they grew vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish Heart was darkened; from which like Cases and Examples we may infer, that divine Grace might be really imparted, although no effect correspondent to its main Design were produced. Neither, because we cannot alledge any evident Instances of Persons converted or saved by Virtue of this Grace (*this parvior occultiorque gratia, more sparing and secret grace*, as the good Writer *de Vocatione Gentium* calls it) are we forced to grant there were none such; but as in *Israel* when *Elias* said, the Children of *Israel* have forsaken God's Covenant, thrown down his Altars, and slain his Prophets with the sword; And I, I only am left; there were yet in *Israel*, living closely, seven thousand knees, who had not bowed to *Baal*: So among the Generations of Men, commonly overgrown with Ignorance and Impiety, there might (for all that we can know) be divers Persons indiscernible to common View, who by complying with the Influences of God's Grace, have obtained competently to know God, and to reverence him; sincerely to love Goodness, and hate Wickedness; with an honest Heart, to observe the Laws of Reason and Righteousness; in such a Manner and Degree which God might accept; so that the Grace afforded might not only *sufficere omnibus in testimonium* (suffice to convince all Men) but *quibusdam in remedium* (to correct and cure some) as that Writer *de Voc. Gent.* speaks. The Consideration of God's Nature and Providence doth serve farther to persuade the Truth of this Assertion. If God be rich in Mercy and Bounty toward all his Creatures, as such (and such he frequently asserts himself to be) if he be All-present, and All-provident, as he certainly is, how can we conceive him to stand as an unconcerned Spectator of what Men do, in Affairs of this Consequence? That he should be present beholding Men to run precipitantly into desperate Mischiefs and Miscarriages, without offering to stay or obstruct them; struggling with their Vices and Follies, without affording them any relief or furtherance; assaulted by strong Temptations, without yielding any Support or Succour; panting after Rest and Ease, without vouchsafing some guidance and assistance toward the obtaining them? How can he see Men invincibly erring and inevitably sinning, without making good what the *Psalmist* says of him: *Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way*; to withhold his Grace in such Cases, seemeth inconsistent with the kind and compassionate Nature of God, especially such as now it stands, being reconciled to Mankind, by the

Medi-



*Mediator of God and Men, Christ Jesus.* He also, that is so bountiful and indulgent toward all Men in regard to their Bodies and temporal Estate; who preserveth their Life from Destruction, who protecteth them continually from Danger and Mischief; who openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desires of every living thing, who satisfieth the longing Soul, and filleth the hungry Soul with goodness. Who (as St. Paul speaketh) filleth mens hearts with food and gladness, is it likely that he should altogether neglect their spiritual Welfare; and leave their Souls utterly destitute of all Sustenance or Comfort; that he should suffer them to lie fatally exposed to eternal Death and Ruin; without offering any Means of Redress or Recovery? To conceive so of God, seemed very unreasonable even to a Pagan Philosopher: Do you think (saith Max. Tyrius) that Divination, Poetry, and such like Things, are by divine Inspiration insinuated into Men's Souls, and that Vertue (so much better, and so much rarer a thing) is the work of moral Art? You have forsooth a worthy Conceit of God, who take him to be liberal in

bestowing mean things, and sparing of better things. He that (as St. Paul saith) giveth to all Men Life, Breath, and all Things, will he with-hold from any that best of Gifts, and most worthy of him to give, that Grace whereby he may be

Ἡ τοιαύτη ἀξιοσύνη τοῦ Θεοῦ, περὶ  
μὴ τὰ φαῦλα καλῶς ἢ ἀφθονοῦς παρ-  
οικισμοῦ, περὶ ὅτι τὰ κρεῖττω ἀπορροῖ  
Acs 17. 25.

able to serve him, to praise him, to glorify him, yea, to please and gratify him; to save a Creature and Subject of his; the Thing wherein he so much delighteth? From hence also, that God hath vouchsafed general Testimonies of his Goodness, inducements to seek him, footsteps whereby he may be discovered and known, a Light of Reason and Law of Nature written upon Mens Hearts; attended with Satisfaction, and Checks of Conscience; so many Dispositions to Knowledge and Obedience (as St. Paul teacheth us) we may collect that he is not deficient in communicating interieur Assurances, promoting the good Use and Improvement of those Talents; for that otherwise the bestowing them is frustraneous and useless; being able to produce no good Effect; yea, it rather is an Argument of Unkindness, being apt only to produce an ill Effect in those, upon whom it is conferr'd; an aggravation of Sin, an accumulation of Guilt and Wrath upon them.

Acs 14. 17.  
17. 27.  
Rom. 1. 19.  
2. 15.

If it be said, that having such Grace is inconsistent with the want of an explicit Knowledge of Christ, and of Faith in him; why may not we say, that as probably (so St. Chrysostome, vid. Mont. App. I.) most good People before our Lord's coming received Grace without any such Knowledge or Faith; that as to Idiots and Infants our Saviour's meritorious Performances are applied (in a manner unknowable by us) without so much as a Capacity to know or believe any thing; that so we (to whom God's Judgments are inscrutable, and his Ways uninvestigable) know not how Grace may be communicated unto, and Christ's Merits may avail for other ignorant Persons. In respect to whom we may apply that of St. John; The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. However that such Persons may have a Grace capacitating them to arrive to that Knowledge and Faith, to which fuller Communications of Grace are promised; so that in reasonable Esteem (as we shall presently shew) the Revelation of Evangelical Truth, and the Gift of Faith may be supposed to be conferred upon all Men—so that we may apply to them that in the Revelation; Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in unto him, and sup with him, and be with me; (that is, Behold, I allure every Man to the Knowledge and embracing of Christianity; if any Man will open his Mind and Heart; so as to comply with my Solicitations, I am ready to bestow upon him the Participation of Evangelical Mercies and Blessings) and to such Persons those Promises and Rules in the Gospel, may appertain; He that asketh receiveth, He that seeketh findeth; to him that knocketh it shall be opened: The heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him. He that is faithful in the use of the least grace shall be rewarded. And, to him that bath (or that diligently keepeth and husbandeth what he hath) shall more be given?

Rom. 11. 33.

John 1. 9.

Apoc. 3. 20.

Εἰ τις ὀφθαλμῶν  
ἐκ αὐτοῦ ἔχει  
ἀμάρταν.

Joh. 9. 41.

15. 22.

Luke 11. 10.

13.

Luke 19. 17.

19. 26.

And how God sometimes dealeth with such Persons the eminent Instances of St. Paul and Cornelius do shew. But concerning this Point, I spake somewhat before, and have perhaps been too large now; I shall only add that Saying of



*Puto quod pius sensus non debeat in ea questione turbari, qua de omnium & non omnium hominum conversione generatur: si ea quae clara sunt non de his quae occultata sunt obscurerent, & dum pro-caciter insistimus clausis, excludamur ab apertis, Co. Lib. 1. cap. 8.*

the wise Writer *de Voc. Gen.* A pious Mind (saith he) should not, I think, be troubled at that question, which is made concerning the Conversion of all, or not all Men; if we will not obscure those things which are clear, by those things which are secret; and while we wantonly insist upon things shut up, we be not excluded from those which are open and plain: Which in effect is the same with this; that since we are plainly taught,

that our Lord is the Saviour of all Men; and it is consequent thence, that he hath procured Grace sufficiently capacitating all Men to obtain Salvation; we need not perplex the Business, or obscure so apparent a Truth, by debating how that Grace is imparted; or by labouring overmuch in reconciling the Dispensation thereof with other Dispensations of Providence.

## SERMON XLI.

### The Doctrine of Universal Redemption asserted and explained.

1 TIM. IV. 10.

—The living God; who is the Saviour of all Men, especially of those that believe.

5. **J**ESUS is the Saviour of all Men, as the Conductor of all Men into and through the way of Salvation. It is a very proper Title, and most due to those brave Captains, who by their Wisdom and Valour have freed their Country from Straits and Oppressions. So were those Judges and Princes, who anciently delivered Israel from their Enemies, commonly stiled: In the time of their trouble (say the Levites in *Nehemiah*) when they cried unto thee, thou heardst them from Heaven, and according to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them Saviours, who saved them out of the band of the enemy; so are Othniel and Ehud particularly called; and Moses signally: The same (saith St. Stephen of him) did God send to be ἀρχων & σωτήρ, a Commander and a Saviour (or Redeemer) to the Children of Israel; for that he by a worthy and happy Conduct did free them from the Egyptian Slavery. And thus was Demetrius by the Athenians (for his delivering them from the Macedonian Subjection, and restoring their Liberty to them) entitled εὐεργάτης & σωτήρ, a Benefactor and Saviour. Thus with greatest Reason is Jesus so called, as being ἀρχηγός & σωτήρας, the Captain of Salvation (so he is called by the Apostle to the Hebrews) ἀρχηγός ζωῆς (the Captain of Life, as St. Peter names him, the chief Leader unto eternal Life) ἀρχηγός πίστεως (the Captain of our Faith; he that hath revealed that saving Doctrine, which is the Power of God to Salvation) and these Titles we have conjoined by St. Peter in the Acts; Him hath God exalted, ἀρχηγόν & σωτήρα, as a Captain and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and remission of Sins. This he is to us several Ways, by Direction both instructive and exemplary; by his Protection and Governance; by his mating and quelling the Enemies of Man's Salvation; which Things more specially and compleatly he hath performed in respect to faithful Christians, yet in a manner also he hath truly done them for and toward all Men; as we shall distinctly consider.

6. Jesus



6. *Jesus is the Saviour of all Men* (we say) as having perfectly discovered and demonstrated the Way and Means of Salvation; the gracious Purposes of God concerning it; the Duties required by God in order to it: The great Helps and Encouragements to seek it; the mighty Determents from neglecting it, the whole Will of God, and Concernment of Man in relation thereto; briefly, all saving Truths he hath revealed unto all Men; *Mysteries of Truth, which were bidden from Ages and Generations*, which no Fancy of Man could invent, no Understanding could reach, no Reason could by Discussion clear (concerning the Nature, Providence, Will and Purpose of God; the Nature, Original and State of Man; concerning the Laws and Rules of Practice, the Helps thereto, the Reward thereof, whatever is important for us to know in order to Happiness) he did plainly discover, and bring to light; he did with valid Sorts of Demonstration assert and confirm. The doing which (as having so much Efficacy) toward Salvation, (and being ordinarily so necessary thereto) is often called *saving*; as particularly by St. James; when he saith, *He that turns a Sinner from the error of his way shall save a Soul from death.* And by St. Paul; *Take heed to thy word and doctrine, for so doing thou shalt save thy self, and thy hearers.* That our Lord hath thus (according to his Design, and according to reasonable Esteem) saved all men, we are authorized by the holy Scripture to say; for he is there represented to be the light of the World; the true light that enlighteneth every Man coming into the World; the day-spring from on high, which hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet in the way of peace. By him the saving grace of God hath appeared unto all Men. By him (as Esay prophesied, and St. John the Baptist applied it) all flesh did see the Salvation of God. Of him it was also foretold (as St. Paul teacheth us) *I have set thee for the light of the Nations, that thou shouldest be for Salvation unto the ends of the Earth.* Coming he preached Peace *τοῖς μακρὰν καὶ τοῖς ἐγγύς* (longè latèque) to them that were far, and them that were near, that is, to all Men every where. While I am in the World, said he, *I am the light of the World*; shining, like the Sun, indifferently unto all; and when he withdrew his corporal Presence, he farther virtually diffused his Light, for he sent his Messengers with a general Commission and Command to teach all Men concerning the Benefits procured for them, and the Duties required from them; *Going into the World, make all Nations Disciples, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you.* *Going into the World, preach the Gospel unto every Creature* (or to the whole Creation: ) So it ought to be, that in his Name should be preached repentance and remission of Sins unto all Nations. And, such was the Tenour of the Apostolical Commission; *Thou shalt be witness for him toward all Men*; said Ananias to St. Paul. Accordingly, in compliance with those Orders, did the Apostles, in God's Name, instruct and admonish all Men, plainly teaching, seriously inviting to, strongly persuading, and earnestly entreating all Men to embrace the Truth, and enjoy the Benefits of the Gospel, and consequently to be saved: *The Times of Ignorance* (saith St. Paul) *God having winked at, doth now invite all Men every where to repent*; And, *We are Embassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, We pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God—we pray you, you as Members of that World, which God was in Christ reconciling to himself; And, We preach Christ—Warning every Man, and teaching every Man in all Wisdom, that we may present every Man perfect in Christ Jesus* (or render every Man a good Christian.) Thus was the Gospel according to our Saviour's Intent and Order preach'd (as St. Paul saith of it) *ἐν παντί καὶ ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ*, in the whole Creation under Heaven; thus did God shew, That he would have all Men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the Truth; whence our Lord (in regard to the Nature and Design of his Performance in this kind) is the common Saviour, as the common Master of Truth, and Enlightner of the World, and Proclaimer of God's Will to Mankind.

If now it be required or objected; why then is not the Gospel revealed unto Men? How comes it to pass, that no Sound of this saving Word, no Glimpse of this heavenly Light doth arrive to many Nations? How can so general and large Intention consist with so particular and sparing Execution? What Benefit can we imagin them capable to receive from this Performance of our Saviour, who still do sit in total Ignorance of the Gospel, in Darkness, and the shadow of Death?

How



Luke 1. 74. *How can they call upon him, in whom they believe not? And how can they believe in him, of whom they have not heard?*  
 Matt. 4. 16.  
 Rom. 10. 14.

To this Suggestion, I answer,

1. That God's Intentions are not to be interpreted, nor his Performances estimated by Events, depending on the Contingency of human Actions, but by his own Declarations and Precepts, together with the ordinary Provision of competent Means, in their own Nature sufficient to produce those Effects which he declares himself to intend, or to perform. What he reveals himself to design he doth really design it, what he says, that he performeth, he (according to moral Esteem, that is so far as to ground Duties of Gratitude and Honour, Proceedings of Justice and Reward) doth perform, although the Thing upon other Accounts be not effected.

Thus for Instance, God would have all Men to live together here in Peace, in Order, in Health, conveniently, comfortably, cheerfully; according to Reason, with Vertue and Justice; and in the best State toward Happiness; for these Purposes he hath endowed them with reasonable Faculties, he hath engraven on their Minds a natural Law, he hath furnished them with all Sorts of Instruments and Helps conducive to those Ends, he promoteth them by Dispensations of Providence, and (probably) by internal influences of Grace; yet often all those Means (by the perverseness and stupidity of Men) do prove ineffectual, so that Wars, Disorders, Diseases, Vices, Iniquities and Oppressions, Troubles and Miseries do commonly abound in the World. Likewise God desires, that in his Church, Knowledge and Piety, Peace and Charity, and good Order should grow and flourish; to which Purposes he hath appointed Teachers to instruct, and Governours to watch over his People; he hath obliged each Man to advise and admonish his Brother; he hath declared holy Precepts and Rules of Practice; he hath propounded vast Encouragements and Rewards, and threatened dreadful Punishments; he hath promised and doth afford requisite Assurances; being himself always present and ready to promote those Ends by his Grace; yet notwithstanding by the voluntary neglect or abuse of these Means (the Guides being blind, negligent, unfaithful; or the People being indocile, sluggish, refractory; or both perverted with bad Affections) often Ignorance, Error and Impiety prevail, Love is cool and dead, Schisms and Factions are rife in the Church. Which Events are not to be conceived derogatory to God's good-Will and good-Intentions, or to his kind and careful Providence toward Men; but we are notwithstanding to esteem and acknowledge him the Author and Donor of those good Things; in respect to them no less blessing and praising him, than if they were really accomplished by Man's Concurrence and Compliance; he having done his Part in that due Measure and Manner, which Wisdom prompts; having indeed done the same, as when they are affected. So God having expressly declared, that he would have all Men to know and embrace the Gospel, having made a universal Promulgation thereof, having sent forth *Apostles* to disseminate it every-where, having obliged every Man to confer his best Endeavour toward the Propagation thereof; if by the want of Fidelity, Zeal, or Industry in them, to whom this Care is intrusted, or upon whom this Duty is incumbent; or if by the Carelessness and Stupidity of those, who do not regard what is done in the World; or if by Mens voluntary shutting their Eyes, or stopping their Ears (as the *Jews* did of old to the Prophetical Instructions and Admonitions) God's Heavenly Truth becometh not universally known; 'tis not reasonable to impute this defaultance to God, or to conceive him therefore not universally to desire and design Mens Instruction and Salvation consequent thereon. Let me (for the Illustration of this Matter) put a Case, or propound a Similitude. Suppose a great Kingdom consisting of several Provinces should have revolted from their Sovereign; disclaiming his Authority, neglecting and disobeying his Laws; That the good Prince, out of his Goodness and Pity toward them (and upon other good Considerations moving him thereto, suppose the Mediation of his own Son) instead of Prosecuting them with deserved Vengeance, should grant a general Pardon and Amnesty, in these Terms, or upon these Conditions, that whoever of those Rebels willingly should come in, acknowledge his Fault, and promise future Loyalty, or Obedience to his Laws declared to them, should be received into Favour, have Impunity, enjoy Protection, and obtain Rewards from him.

Farther



Farther, for the effectuating this gracious intent, suppose that he should appoint and commissionate Messengers, empowering and charging them to divulge the Purport of this Act of Grace to all the People of that Kingdom. Admit now, that these Messengers should go forth, and seat themselves only in some Provinces of that Kingdom, proclaiming this universal Pardon (universal as to the Design, and as to the Tenour thereof) only in those, neglecting others; or that, striving to propagate it farther, they should be rejected and repelled; or that from any the like Cause the Knowledge thereof should not reach to some remoter Provinces; it is plain, that indeed the effect of that Pardon would be obstructed by such a Carriage of the Affair; but the Tenour of that Act would not thereby be altered; nor would the Failure in Execution (consequent upon the Ministers or the Peoples Misbehaviour) detract from the real Amplitude of the Prince's Intent; no more, than the wilful Incredulity, Refusal, or Non-compliance of some Persons, where the Business is promulged and notified, would prejudice the same. 'Tis plain the Prince meant favourably toward all, and provided carefully for them; although by accident (not imputable to him) the designed Favours and Benefits do not reach all. The Case so plainly suits our Purpose, that I need not make any Application. The *holy Fathers* do by several like Similitudes endeavour to illustrate this Matter, and somewhat to assuage the Difficulty. They compare our Saviour to the Sun, who shines indifferently to all the World, although there be some private Corners and secret Caves, to which his Light doth not come; although some shut their Windows or their Eyes and exclude it; although some are blind and do not see it. That mystical Sun of Righteousness (saith St.

*Ambrose*) is risen to all, came to all, did suffer and rose again for all ---- but if any one doth not believe in *Christ*, he defrauds himself of the general Benefit. As if one shutting the Windows should exclude the Beams of the Sun, the Sun is not therefore not risen to all. They compare our Lord to a Physician, who professes to relieve and cure all that shall have recourse to his help; but doth cure only those, who seek for Remedy, and are willing to take the Medicine; because all (saith \* St. *Ambrose* again) do not desire Cure, but most do shun it, lest the Ulcer should smart by Medicaments, therefore *volentes curat, non astringit invitos*; he cures only the willing, doth not compel those that are unwilling; they only receive Health, who desire Medicine. Evangelical Grace, say they, is like a Fountain standing openly, to which all Men have free access; at which all Men may quench their thirst; if they will enquire after it, and go thereto. The Fountain of Life (saith *Arnobius*) is open to all; nor is any Man hindered or driven from the right of drinking it. The Covenant of Grace is, say they, a Door standing open to all, whereinto all have liberty to enter ---- when an entrance (saith St. *Chrysostome*) being opened to all, and there being nothing that hinders, some being wilfully naught abide without, they have no other but their own wickedness to impute their destruction unto.

And again he puts the Question, If *Christ* enlighteneth every Man that cometh into the World, how is it that so many remain unenlightened? &c. To which he answers, that If some wilfully shutting the eyes of their Minds, will not receive the beams of this light, it is not from the nature of light that those remain still in darkness, but from the wickedness of those who wilfully deprive themselves of the gift of it, &c.

μὴ τὸ ἵσος καλεῖται τιμὴ· οἱ δὲ μὴ δίδοντες ἀπολαύσαι τὸ δωρεὰς ταύτης, ἑαυτοῖς δίκαιοι ταύτην ἀνείη λογισαμένοι τὴν πηρώσιν.  
Chryl. in Joh. 1. homil. 7.

*Mysticum Sol ille justitia omnibus ortus est, omnibus venit, omnibus passus est, & omnibus surrexit: si quis autem non credit in Christum, generali beneficio se fraudat, ut si quis clausis fenestris radios solis excludat, non ideo Sol non ortus est omnibus, &c.*  
Amb. in Psal. 118. Ser. 8.

*Si dies omnibus aequaliter nascitur, & si Sol super omnes pari & aequali luce diffunditur, quanto magis Christus Sol & dies verus, in Ecclesia sua lumen vite eterne pari aequalitate largitur?* Cypr. Ep. 76.

Ἀκούσατε ὅτι οἱ μακρὸν ἀκούσατε οἱ ἰσχυροὶ καὶ ἀπεικονίσει τινὰς ὁ λόγος· ὥς δὲ κοινὸν, ἐπιλαμβάνει πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις· ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἐκκλίνει ἐν λόγῳ. Clem. Alex. Protrep.

Hear ye that are far: hear ye that are near: the word is not hid to any: 'tis a common light: it shineth to all men; there is no Cimmerian to the Word.

*Nunquid non medicus idcirco proponit in publico, ut omnes se ostendas velle salutare si velint.* Ambr. l. Tom. 2.

\* *Venit* ---- ut vulnera nostra curaret, sed quia non omnes medicinam expetunt, sed plerique refugiunt, ne medicamentis compungatur vis ulceris, ideo volentes, &c. Ambr. de David. 3. 11.

*Patet omnibus fons vite, neque ab jure potandi quisquam prohibetur, aut pellitur.* Arnob. lib. 2.

Ὅταν τὸ εἶδος πᾶσιν ἀποκαλύψῃ, καὶ μὴδὲν τὸ καλὸν οὐκ ἐκκλίνει, ἰδεομεν καὶ τινὲς ἐκ τῶν μὴ ὁρίων, παρ' ὧν ἐκκλίνει, ἀλλ' ἡ παρὰ τὴν οὐρανὴν ποιεῖται ἀποκαλύπτει. Chryl. in 1 Joh. homil. 7.

Εἰ φωτίζει πᾶσα ἀνθρώπων ἐκκλίνει εἰς τὸν κόσμον, πᾶς ἀφ' οὗτος μεμνηκασί τοσούτοι; ὁ δὲ δὴ πᾶντες ἐπέγνωσαν τὸ Χριστὸν τὸ εἶδος· ὥς ἐν φωτίζει πάντα ἀνθρώπων; τότε εἰς αὐτὸν ἤκου' εἰ δὲ τίς τις ἐκκλίνει τὸς τὸ διαφωτισθῆναι μὴ σῶντες ἐκ ἰδέμεν τὸ εἶδος οὐδὲν τὸ φωτίζει τὰς αἰτίαι, καὶ παρὰ τὴν τὸ φῶς φύσιν ἡ σκότησις ἐκκλίνει, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὴν κακουργίαν τὸν ἰσχυρὸν ἀποστρέφειν ἑαυτοῖς τὸ δωρεὰς· ἡ μὲν δὲ χάρις εἰς πάντας ἐκκλίνει· πᾶσι δὲ ὁμοῦς προσεμεμνη, καὶ



ὡς αἶψα πνέον, ὡς ποταμὸς χυθὼν,  
ὡς αἶψα ἀναγὰς, ὡς ἀλλοτρίος δια-  
Naz. Orat. 40:

St. Gregory Nazianzen resembles the Grace of Baptism (as to its Community and Freedom of Use) to the Breathing of the Air, to the Spreading of Light, to the Vicissitude of Seasons, to the Aspect of the Creation; things most obvious and common to all.

If this Answer do not fully satisfy, I adjoyn farther,

Rom. 1. 18.  
28.

2. That God beside that ordinary Provision is ready to interpose extraordinarily in disclosing his Truth to them who are worthy of such Favour, and fit to receive it; and that God's general Desire and Design of revealing his Truth to all Men is very well consistent with his providential (not only negative and permissive, but even positive and active) withholding the Discovery thereof from some Persons, yea some Nations; for that neither his Wisdom, Goodness, or Justice might permit him, that he should impart that Revelation to such Persons whom he seeth altogether indisposed to comply therewith, and unfit to profit thereby; who have extremely abused the lesser Graces, and not improved or mis-improved the lesser Talents afforded them; detained inferior Truths in Unrighteousness, and have not liked to retain God in their knowledge, have therefore justly been delivered up to a reprobate Sense; who have so depraved their Minds with wicked Prejudices and Affections, that the Truth being offered to them, they would certainly either stupidly neglect it, or scornfully reject it, (or if admitting it in shew) would unworthily abuse it; so that from the imparting the Means of knowing it, no Glory to God, no Benefit to Man would accrue, but rather Contempt of God, and Prejudice to Men would ensue upon it: there are some Persons of that wicked and Gigantick disposition (contracted by evil Practice) that, should one offer to instruct them in Truth, or move them to Piety, would be ready to say with Polyphemus in Homer,

Ila. 30. 10.

Odyss. 1.

Νῆπιός ἐσ' ὃ ξάν', ἢ πολὺ δὲν ἀλλοτρίος,  
Ὅς μὲν δὲός μιν λέγει ἢ δαΐδμεν, ἢ ἀλλότρεος.

Friend, you are a Fool, or a great Stranger to me,  
who advisest me to fear or regard the Deity.

Exod. 5. 2.

Prov. 1. 24.

Luke 11. 33.

John 14. 22.

Matt. 3. 8.

1 Cor. 12. 7.

Matt. 4. 18.

Joh. 1. 24, 37.

Matt. 19. 27.

Luke 19. 8, 9.

John 1. 47.

Luke 19. 8, 9.

Matt. 21. 31.

Luke 5. 31.

Or (which is the same) with Pharaoh: *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.* (or neither will I do as you in God's Name admonish me) who like that unhappy Prince, by no efficacy of Arguments, no wonders of Power are to be convinced of their Folly, or converted from their Wickedness: Some, like those of Chorazin and Bethsaida, whom not all the powerful Discourses spoken to them, all the mighty Works done in them, sufficient to have brought Tyre and Sidon to Repentance, can induce to mind or obey the Truth; unto which sort of People (except upon some particular Occasions, and for special Reasons) it is not expedient that divine Truth should be exposed. We may also observe how our Lord being asked by St. Jude a Question like to ours; *Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thy self unto us, and not to the world?* thus resolves it; *If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him:* implying the ordinary Reason of God's making a difference in the Discoveries of himself to be the previous Disposition and Behaviours of Men toward God; and interpretatively toward our Lord himself.

That God doth commonly observe this Method (plainly suitable to divine Justice, Wisdom and Goodness) to dispense the Revelation of his Truth according to Mens disposition to receive it, and aptness to make a fruitful and worthy Use of it, to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance, as Saint John Baptist spake; and to withhold it from those who are, indisposed to admit it, or unfit to profit by it: We may from divers express Passages and notable Instances (besides many probable Intimations) of Scripture learn. We may on the one hand observe, that those whom our Saviour did chuse to call, were Persons disposed easily upon his Call to comply: to forsake their Fathers, and their Nets; to leave their Receipts of Custom; to relinquish all (Relations, Occupations, Estates) and to follow him; faithful Israelites, without Guile, like Nathanael (that is, as is probably conjectured, St. Bartholomew) Men honestly Devout, and Charitable, like Zachew; that he chose to converse with Publicans and Sinners, Men apt to be convinced of their



their Errours, and touched with the Sense of their Sins; apt to see their Need of Mercy and Grace, and therefore ready to entertain the Overtures of them; that he blesses God for revealing his Mysteries to Babes (to innocent and well-meaning, imprejudicate and uncorrupted Persons) such as if Men were not, they could in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, or become Christians; those *poor in spirit, of whom is the kingdom of heaven*; those *foolish things* which God chuses as most fit objects of his Mercy and Grace; that he enjoined his Disciples, in their Travels for the Promulgation and Propagation of the Gospel, to inquire concerning the Worthiness or Fitness of Persons, and accordingly to make more close Applications to them: (*Into what city or village ye enter, enquire who therein is worthy*; and entering in abide there) Of this proceeding we have a notable Instance in *Cornelius*, who for his honest Piety (correspondent to the Proportion of Knowledge vouchsafed him) was so acceptable to God, that in regard thereto he obtained from him the Revelation of Truth in a peculiar and extraordinary Manner. And *St. Paul* was another most remarkable Example thereof; who for the like Reason was so wonderfully called, as himself intimates, describing himself to have been *ζηλωτής θεού, zealously affected toward God, according to the righteousness in the law*, blameless; one that had continually \* behaved himself with all good conscience toward God; who even in the Persecution of God's Truth did proceed with an honest Meaning, and according to his Conscience, for which Cause he saith, that God had Mercy on him; foreseeing how willingly he would embrace the Truth, and how earnestly promote it: We may also observe, how in the *Acts of the Apostles*, the Holy Spirit commonly directed the Apostles to such Places, where a competent Number of People were well disposed to receive the Truth; who were *εὐσεβοὶ εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, well-disposed to the Kingdom of heaven*, and consequently by God's Fore-sight, (*παραμύνοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον*) ordained to have the word of eternal life (the *πρὸς σωτηρίαν τοῦ θεοῦ*, as it is in a parallel Place called) discovered to them; such People as the *Bereans*, Men ingenuous and tractable; who consequently entertained the Word, *καὶ πάντες προσέκυαν, with all promptitude and alacrity*. To such Persons God sometimes by extraordinary Revelation directed the Apostles to preach; as to the *Corinthians*, in respect to whom, the Lord spake to *St. Paul* in a Vision, saying, *Fear not, but speak and be not silent, for I am with thee, because πολλοὶ ἔσσι μοι λαός, there is for me much people in this city; much people whom I see disposed to comply with my Truth*. So in behalf of the *Macedonians*, *ἄνθρωπος μακεδόν, a certain man of Macedonia* was in a Vision seen to *St. Paul*, exhorting him and saying, *Passing into Macedonia help us*: Thus on that Hand doth God take special Care that his Truth be manifested to such as are fitly qualified to embrace it and use it well: Thus is God ready to make good that Answer of *Pothinus* (Bishop of *Lions*, and immediate Successour to *St. Irenaeus*) to the *Præfēt*, who asking him who was the Christians God, was answered, *ὅτι ἢ ἀξίος γινώσκῃ, If thou be worthy, thou shalt know*; thus (as the *Wise man* divinely saith) the divine Wisdom, *ἀξιολύτως ἀντὶς προσερχέται ζητοῦν, Goeth about seeking such as are worthy of her; sheweth her self favourable unto them in their ways, and meeteth them in every thought*.

And on the other hand, that God with-holds the special Discoveries of his Truth, upon Account of Men's Indispositions and Demerits, may likewise very plainly appear. We may suppose our Lord to have observed himself, what he ordered to his Disciples; *Not to give that which is holy to Dogs, nor to cast their Pearls before Swine* (not to expose the holy and precious Truth to very leud and fierce People, who would snarl at it and trample upon it) we may allow God in the Dispensation of his Truth and Grace to do what he bids the Apostles to do: Before he enters into any House, or applies himself to any Person, to \* examine whether the House or Person be worthy; that is willing to receive him, and apt to treat him well; if not, to decline them. Our Lord we see did leave even his own Country, seeing Men there were not disposed to use him with due Honour and Regard; seeing they were possessed with vain Prejudices, apt to obstruct the Efficacy of his divine Instructions and miraculous Performances; so that he was not likely (according to the ordinary way of divine Providence) to produce any considerable Effect towards their Conversion. He could not (it is said) do many miracles there, because of their unbelief; he could not, that is (according to the most just and wise Rules he did observe, he would not do them; because he perceived the doing them would not conduce to any good purpose; that they were not apt



- to look upon those Works as the Effects of divine Power and Goodness, performed for their Benefit (for inducing them to Faith and Repentance) but rather that the doing them would expose God's Mercy to Contempt or Reproach, at least to Neglect or Disregard. Hence our Saviour declined conversing with Persons indisposed to (those *ἄνθρωποι*), who cannot *ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ καλὸν ποιεῖν*.) receive Benefit by his Instruction and Example; to grow wiser or better by his Conversation; as the
- 1 Cor. 2. 14. Pharisees and Scribes; Men prepossessed with corrupt and vicious Affections, obstrusive to the Belief of his Doctrine, and Observance of his Laws; and worldly Persons; proud and self-conceited, crafty and deceitful, covetous, ambitious and
- Rom. 8. 7. worldly Men, incorrigibly tainted with that *φρόνησις τῆς σαρκὸς*, carnal wisdom and affection; which is enmity to God; so that it is not subject to the Law of God, nor can be; inextricably engaged in the Friendship of the World, which is enmity to God: To such Men the Gospel would certainly be a Scandal or a Folly:
- 1 John 2. 15. They would never be able to relish or digest the Doctrine of Purity, Self-denial, Patience, and the like Doctrines opposite to carnal Sense and Conceit which it teacheth. From such wise and prudent Men (conceited of their little Wisdoms, 1 Cor. 1. 26. and doting upon their own Fancies) God did conceal those heavenly Mysteries; which they would have despised and derided: Those *many wise according to the Flesh, many powerful; many noble*, God did not chuse to call into his Church: Accordingly we may observe in the History of the Apostles, that God's Spirit did prohibit the Apostles passing through some Places, it discerning how unsuccessful (at those Seasons in those Circumstances, according to those Dispositions of Men) their Preaching would be: *Passing through Phrygia and Galatia, being hindered by the Spirit to speak the word in Asia; coming to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not.* Moreover there is plainly the like Reason, why God should withhold his saving Truth from some People, as why he should withdraw it from others; when it is abused or proves fruitless: But of such withdrawing we have many plain Instances, attended with the Declaration of the Reasons of them, Our Lord prophesied thus concerning the Jews; *I say unto you, that the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a Nation doing the Fruits thereof;* they when our Saviour would have gathered them under his
- Matt. 21. 43. Wings wilfully refusing. Our Lord charged his Disciples, when by any they were repelled or neglected in their preaching, to leave those Persons and Places *shaking off the Dust from their feet*, in token of an utter (*ὡς ἀπορρίψαντες τὸν σίτον*) detestation and desertion of them: And accordingly we see them practising in their Acts; when they perceived Men perversely contradictory, or desperately senseless and stupid, so that they clamoured against the Gospel, and thrust it from them, they abstained from farther dealing with them, turning their Endeavours other-where, toward Persons of a more docile and ingenuous Temper; thence more susceptible of Faith and Repentance: *To you (say Paul and Barnabas to the contradicting and reproachful Jews) it was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken, but seeing you put it from (or thrust it away from you, ἀντιστείνετε αὐτῷ) and judge your selves unworthy of everlasting Life, we turn to the Gentiles.* So when the Church of Ephesus was grown cold in Charity, and deficient in good Works, God threatens to remove her Candlestick; or to withdraw from her that Light of Truth, which shone with so little beneficial Influence. It seems evident that God for the like Reasons may withhold the Discovery of his Truth, or forbear to interpose his Providence; so as to transmit Light thither, where Men's Deeds are so evil, that they will love Darkness rather than Light, where their Eyes are so dim and weak, that the Light will but offend, and by the having it, hurt them; where they by the having it declared to them, will only incur farther Mischief and Misery; it would prove to them but *ὀσμὴ θανάτου*, a deadly scent, as the most comfortable Perfumes are offensive sometimes and noxious to distemper'd Bodies. Wherefore as where the Light doth shine most clearly, it is Men's voluntary pravity, that by it many are not effectually brought to Salvation; so it is Men's voluntary depraving and corrupting themselves (misusing their natural Light, choaking the Seeds of natural Ingenuity, thwarting God's secret whispers and motions, complying with the Suggestions of the wicked one) so as to be rendred unmeet for the susception of God's heavenly Truth and Grace, which hinders God (who proceedeth ordinarily with Men, in sweet and reasonable Methods, not in way of
- impe-



impetuous Violence and Coaction) from dispensing them: We may say of such in the Words of the Prophet, *They have chosen their own ways, and their Soul delighteth in their Abominations: Your Iniquities have turned away these Things, and your Sins have withheld good Things from you.* Τῇ ἑαυτῶν ἀγαθότητι πᾶσαν ὁ νόμος ἐγγίζει, *God doth by his goodness approach to all, but we set our selves at distance by Sin, saith St. Basil; and, ὅπου αὐτοὶ προαίρεται πονηρία, ἐκεῖ καὶ ἀποχὴ καὶ χάρις, where there is self-chosen, or affected wickedness, there is a withholding of Grace, saith another Father (apud Cyrill. Hier.)* The Gospel, if it be bidden, 'tis (as St. Paul says) bidden *in vi-  
ris perditis, among lost Men (that is, Men desperately gone in Wickedness, incorrigible, unreclaimable People) in whom the God of this World (that is, as St. Chry-  
sostome expounds it, not the Devil, but the good God himself) hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, so that the light of the glorious Gospel hath not shined  
to them (αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἐπίφλωσαν; how then did God blind them? Saith St. Chrysostome) ἐκ ἐκρηγῆσας αἱ τῶν, ἀπαρὰ not by any efficacy of his upon them toward that; Ἐν ὅτι  
that: αὐτῶν ἀφ' οὗ καὶ συγχωρήσας, but by Permission and Concession; for so the Scripture  
is wont to speak: Ἐπειδὴ οὗ αὐτοὶ πείσθησαν πρῶτον, καὶ ἀρετῆς ἑαυτοὺς κατέκριναν τὸ  
ἰδεῖν τὰ μυστήρια, καὶ αὐτοὶ λοιπὸν ἔασι, ἀλλὰ πῶς ἰδεῖν ποῖον; πρὸς βίαν ἔλκεν, καὶ ἐκ-  
καλύπτει μὴ βυλομένοις ἰδεῖν; ἀλλὰ μάλλον ἂν κατηγόρησαν, καὶ ἐκ αὐτῶν εἶδον. Seeing  
(saith he) they disbelieved first, and constituted themselves unworthy to see the my-  
steries, even God at last let them alone; for what should he have done? should he  
have drawn them violently, and discovered it to them being unwilling to see? they  
would then have more despised it and not have seen it. God is ever willing and  
ready to dispense his Mercies and Favours, but he is not wont to do it extraordi-  
narily (or beside the course of his ordinary Provision) but in a proper and fit  
Season; (in that καὶ ἐν ὑποσώματι, acceptable Time and Day of Salvation, when  
he seeth Men capable of receiving them) which Season commonly dependeth upon  
Man's Will and Choice, or the results of them. Καθόλου δὲ ὁ Θεὸς οὐδὲν τὸς π  
ἀεὶς ἡμῶν ἀγαθῶν καὶ μὴ ὁδὸν τοῦ προσηκούστος ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἰδόντες. Σωτήρ γὰρ ἔστιν ἡμῶν ὁ Χριστὸς μὲν ἡμῶν  
δ' ἐπὶ πρὸς δὲ ὅσον ἐκλήιδεον. ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐχρῆν, τὴν ἑαυτῶν δόξαν ἐν ἐργασίᾳ for (saith  
Clemens. Alex. in his 7th of the Stromata, where he clearly and fully affirms our  
present Doctrine) Our Lord is not the Saviour of some, and not of others: but ac-  
cording as Men are fitly disposed, he hath distributed his Beneficence to all. St. Au-  
gustine himself somewhere speaketh no less; or rather more:  
*Præcedit aliquid in peccatoribus (saith he) quo, quamvis nondum  
sint justificati, digni efficiantur justificatione: Et idem præcedit in  
aliis peccatoribus quo digni sint obtusione. But,**

3. If all these Considerations do not thoroughly satisfy us concerning the Reason of God's Proceedings in this Case, we may consider that God's Providence is in-  
scrutable and impenetrable to us; that (according to the Psalmist) as *God's mercy  
is in the Heavens, and his faithfulness reacheth to the Clouds; so his Righteousness is  
like the great Mountains (too high for our Reason to climb) and his Judgments,  
πολλὴ ἄβυσσος, a great Abyss, too deep for our feeble Understanding to fathom;  
that his ways are more subtle and spiritual than to be traced by our dim and gross  
Sight. So upon Contemplation of a like Case, although as it seems, hardly so obscure  
or unaccountable as this, the Cause concerning God's conditional Rejection of that  
People, whom he in a special manner had so much and so long favoured) St. Paul  
himself doth profess. That therefore although we cannot fully resolve the Diffi-  
culty, we notwithstanding without Distrust should adhere to those positive and plain  
Declarations, whereby God representeth himself seriously designing and earnestly  
desiring, *That all Men should come to the knowledge of the Truth; that none should  
perish, but that all should come to repentance; not doubting but his declared Mind,  
and his secret Providence, although we cannot thoroughly discern or explain their  
Consistency, do yet really and fully conspire. But no farther at this Time.**



# SERMON XLII.

## The Doctrine of Universal Redemption asserted and explained.

1 TIM. IV. 10.

-----*The living God ; who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.*

8. **A**S Our Saviour was such to all Men by his Doctrine, or the general Discovery of all saving Truth ; so may he be esteemed such in regard to his exemplary Practice ; whereby upon the open Stage of the World, and in the common View of all that would attend unto him, He did represent a living Pattern of all Goodness ; by imitating which, we may certainly attain Salvation. He that will consider his Practice shall find it admirably fitted for general Instruction and Imitation ; calculated for all Places and all Sorts of People ; suited to the Complexions, to the Capacities, to the Degrees, to the Callings of all Men ; so that every Sort of Men may from it draw profitable Direction, may in it find a Copy, even of his particular Behaviour : For he was a great Prince, illustrious in Birth, excellent in Glory, and abounding in all Wealth, yet was born in Obscurity, lived without Pomp, and seemed to possess nothing ; so teaching Men of high rank to be sober, mild and humble, not to rest in, not to regard much, not to hug and cling to the Accommodations and Shews of worldly State ; teaching those of mean Degree to be patient, content and chearful in their Station. He was exceedingly wise and knowing, without Bound or Measure ; yet made no Ostentation of extraordinary Knowledge ; of sharp Wit, of deep Subtily ; did not vent high, dark or intricate Notions ; had in his Practice no reaches and windings of Craft or Policy ; but was in his Doctrine very plain and intelligible, in his Practice very open and clear ; so that what he commonly said or did, not only Philosophers and Statesmen, but almost the simplest Idiots might easily comprehend ; so that those might thence learn not to be conceited of their superfluous Wisdom ; these not to be discouraged in their harmless Ignorance, both having thence an equally sufficient Instruction in all true Righteousness, a complete Direction in the Paths to Happiness, being thereby *σπουδαίοντες εἰς σωτηρίαν*, made wise and learned to Salvation. He did not immerse himself in the Cares, nor engage himself into the Businesses of this World ; yet did not withdraw himself from the Company and Conversation of Men : He retired often from the Crowd, that he might converse with God and heavenly Things ; he put himself into it, that he might impart good to Men, and benefit the World, declining no Sort of Society ; but indifferently conversing with all ; disputing with the Doctors and eating with the *Publicans* ; whence thereby both Men of contemplative and quiet Disposition or Vocations, and Men of busy Spirits, or of active Lives may be guided respectively ; those not to be morose, supercilious, rigid, contemptuous toward other Men ; these not to be so possessed or intangled with the World, as not to reserve some leisure for the culture of their Minds, not to employ some Care upon the Duty of Piety and Devotion ; both may learn, whether in private Retirement or in publick Conversation and Employment, especially to regard the Service of God and the Benefit of Men ; thus was the Example of our Saviour accommodated for all Men ; especially conducting them in the hardest and roughest Parts of the Way leading to Bliss, the Acclivities and Asperities of Duty ; Self-denial, or Neglect of worldly Glory and fleshly Pleasure, Patience,

2 Tim. 3. 15.



Patience, Humility, general Charity; shewing us the possibility of performing such Duties, and encouraging us thereto. Through these difficult and dangerous Passages (as a resolute Chieftain of Life) he undauntedly marched before us, charging, beating back, and breaking through all opposite Forces; all Enemies, all Temptations, all Obstacles; enduring painfully the most furious Assaults of the World; boldly withstanding and happily conquering the most malicious Rage of Hell; so that Victory and Salvation we shall be certain of, if we pursue his Steps, and do not basely (out of faintness or falshood) desert so good a Leader; we shall not fail of the unfading Crown, if *with Patience we run the Race that is set before us, looking unto the Captain and Perfector of our Faith, Jesus who for the joy proposed unto him, endured the Cross, despised the Shame, and hath set down at the right hand of the Throne of God.* Would it not raise and enflame any Courage to see his Commander to adventure so boldly upon all Hazards, to endure so willingly all Hardships; whom would not the Sight of such a \* Forerunner animate and quicken in his Course; who by running in the streight Way of Righteousness, with Alacrity and Constancy, hath obtained himself a most glorious Crown, and holdeth forth another like thereto, for the Reward of those who follow him. Now as our Lord's Doctrine, so did his Example, in the Nature and Design thereof, respect and appertain to all Men, it being also like the Light of Heaven, a common Spectacle, a publick Guide (*to guide our steps in the way of Peace*) if it do not appear so, if it do not effectually direct all; it is by Accident and beside God's Intention; 'tis by the Fault of them who should propound it, or of them who have not Eyes fit, or worthy to behold it; briefly, what was said concerning the universal Revelation of Christian Doctrine may be applied to Christ's Practice.

9. *Jesus is the Saviour of all Men* as having combated and vanquished all the Enemies of Man's Welfare and Happiness; *dispossessing* them of all their Pretences and Usurpations over Man, disarming them of all their Power and Force against him; enabling us to withstand and overcome them: Man's Salvation hath many Adversaries of different Nature and kind; some directly oppugning it, some formally prejudicing it, some accidentally hindring it; some alluring, some forcing, some discouraging from it, or from the Means conducing to it; the chief of them we may from the Scripture (with consent of Experience) reckon to be the Devil with all his Envy and Malice, his Usurpations, his Delusions and his Temptations to Sin; the World with its Snares and Baits, its Violences, Persecutions and Menaces; the Flesh or natural Concupiscence, with its bad Inclinations and Propensities to evil; its Lusts and Pleasures; Sin, with its Guilt, and mischievous Consequences; the Law with its rigorous Exactions, hard Measure and harsh Boding; Conscience with its Accusations and Complaints, its Terrours and Anguishes; *Divine Anger* with its effects, *Death and Hell*: All these *our Lord* hath in several and suitable Ways defeated; as to their Malignity, Contrariety, or Enmity in respect of Man's Salvation; he hath (as *Zachary* prophesieth, in his *Benedictus*) *Saved us from our enemies, and from the hands of all that hate us: So that being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might (safely and securely, without danger or fear serve him, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.*

The Devil (that Enemy, that Adversary, that Accuser, that Slanderer, that Murderer, that greedy Lion, that crafty Serpent; the strong one, the mischievous one, the Destroyer) who usurped an Authority) and exercised a Domination over Mankind, as the Prince of this world; who made prize of them, captivated them at his pleasure; who detained them under the Power (or Authority of Darkness and Wickedness; who had the Power of Death; him our Saviour hath destroyed or defeated (*κατήργησεν*, as the Apostle to the Hebrews speaketh; that is, abolished him as to any farther pretence of Empire or Power over us) him he hath dejected from Heaven (*I saw Satan like lightning falling down from Heaven*) him he hath cast out: *Now is the Judgment of this world, now shall the Prince of this world be cast out; all his works be hath dissolved; For this cause (saith St. John) the Son of God did appear, that he might dissolve the works of the Devil.* He combated this strong one (this mighty and dreadful Foe of ours) and baffled him, and bound him, and disarmed him (taking away *πανοπλίαν* *αὐτοῦ*, the whole armour in which he trusted) and spoiled him (*τὰ σκεῦη διηρπάκεν* *αὐτοῦ*, rifled

Arch. 2. 15.

Acts 3. 15.

1 Pet. 2. 21.

Heb. 12. 2.

1 Pet. 5. 4.

Amac. 1. 1.

1 Jo. 2. 1.

Apoc. 2. 10.

Jac. 1. 12.

1 Pet. 5. 4.

Heb. 6. 20.

—δ Χριστός ὡς ἐν τῇ ἰδίας ποιήσεως πρὸς καὶ ἀντὶ τοῦ ἀρχόντι τῷ κόσμῳ τῷ τῷ  
Athan. contra Apoll. p. 628.

Luke 1. 71, 72.

Matt. 13. 28. Luke 11. 19. 1 Pet. 5. 8. Dragon. Apoc. 12. 3. Gc. Acts 10. 38. 1 John 2. 14. Apoc. 12. 9. John 12. 31. 16. 11. 14. 30. Ephes. 2. 2. 6. 12. 2 Cor. 4. 4. Coloss. 1. 13. Acts 26. 18. Acts 10. 38. 2 Tim. 2. 26.

Heb. 2. 14.

Luke 10. 18.

John 12. 31.

16. 11.

1 John 3. 8.

Matt. 12. 29.

Luke 11. 21.



- Colos. 2. 15. *rifled all his baggage, bare away all his Instruments of Mischief) and plundered all his House; leaving him unable (without our fault, our baseness, our negligence) to do us Mischief; (as is intimated in the 12th of St. Matthew, and 11th of St. Luke) yea he triumphed over all those infernal Principalities and Powers, and exposed them (as St. Paul saith:) he imparted to his Disciples Ability to trample upon all by his power, by him all his Followers are so fortified as to conquer the wicked one (as St. John says) he affordeth light to discover all his wiles and snares; Strength and Courage to withstand all his assaults, to repel all his fiery darts, to put him to flight.*
- The World also (that is, the wicked Principles, the bad Customs, the naughty Conversation and Example which commonly prevail here among Men; alluring to evil and deterring from good; the Cares also, the Riches, the Pleasures, the Glories of the World, which possess or distract the Minds, satiate and cloy the Desires, employ all the Affections and Endeavours; take up the time of Men; all in the World which fastneth our Hearts to Earth, and to those low transitory Things; or which sink them down toward Hell; and which detain them from soaring toward Heaven) is an Enemy; an irreconcilable Enemy to our Salvation; the Friendship thereof being inconsistent with a Friendship in us toward the God of our Salvation; or in him toward us: For the friendship of the world is enmity with God; and, *If any man love the world, the friendship of the Father is not in him.* And this Enemy our Lord hath vanquished, and enabled us to overcome. *Being of courage (saith he) I have overcome the world; he, by a constant Self-denial and Temperance, defeated the bewitching Pleasures, and flattering Glories of it; he, by an immoveable Patience, baffled the terrible Frowns, and outrageous Violences of it; he, by a resolute and invincible maintainance of Truth, in great measure routed and dissipated the Errours and Oppositions thereof; he, by a general and intense Charity, surmounted the Provocations, Envies and Enmities thereof; he did it himself for us, and he also enabled us to do it; furnishing us with sufficient Strength, and fit Weapons whereby we may combat and conquer it; may sustain and repel its Force; may shun and elude its baits; for, every one that (by Faith in him) is born of God doth overcome the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith: Who is he that overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? In all these Things (that is in whatever concerns the World and its Enmity; Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, or Famine, or Nakedness, or Peril, or Sword) we are (saith St. Paul) more than conquerors through him that loves us; thanks be to God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ: Our Lord hath procured for us Hopes that will raise our Minds and Affections above the World; Objects employing our Care and Endeavour far beyond it; Satisfaction that will cheer our Hearts, and satiate our Desires without it; Comforts that will support and sustain our Spirits against all the Terrours, all the Assaults, all the Evils thereof; by his Means it is, that we have no reason either to love it, or to fear it, or to value it, or to be concerned about it; but to condemn it as a thing unworthy of us and below us.*
- The Flesh also (that is, all that within us of bodily Temper, or natural Constitution, which inclineth and swayeth us to vicious excess in sensual Enjoyments; which disposeth us to the inordinate Love of our selves, and of other Creatures; which lusts against the spirit, and is adversary thereto; which blindeth and darkneth our Minds in the Apprehension of our Judgment concerning divine Things; which perverteth and disableth (enfeebleth) our Wills in the Choice and Prosecution of what is good; which discomposeth and disordereth the Affections and Passions of our Soul; which continually enticeth and seduceth us to sin) is also an Enemy; a very powerful, very treacherous, very dangerous and very mischievous Enemy to us and our Welfare; rendring us Enemies to God (for the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,) being another law in our members, warring against the law of our mind, and captivating us to the law of sin; engendring and fostering those fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; whose Works and Fruits are all sorts of Intemperance, Impurity, Pride, Envy, Contentiousness; this capital Enemy of ours our Lord did in his own Person first subdue, rejecting all the Suggestions and thwarting the Impulses thereof; entirely submitting to and performing the Will of God; even in willingly drinking that Cup, which was so distastful, so grievous to natural Will and fleshly Desire. He so conquered the Flesh in himself for us; he also con-



conquers it in us, by the Guidance and Assistance of his Grace enabling us to withstand it, and to overcome it. *The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus* (saith St. Paul) *hath freed me from the law of sin and death.* He infuses a Light discerning those Fogs which steam from carnal Sense and Appetite; so that we may clearly discern divine Truths, the Will of God, the Way to Happiness; he inserteth Principles of spiritual Life and Strength counterpoising and overswaying corporeal and sensual Propensions; so that we can restrain sensual Desires, and compose irregular Passions; and submit readily to God's Will; and observe cheerfully God's Law; and freely comply with the Dictates of the Spirit or of right Reason; he so continually aideth, encourageth and upholds us, that we can do all things through Christ that strengtheth us; so that by his Power and Help the flesh with its affections and lusts are crucified; the earthly members are mortified; the old man (which was corrupted according to deceitful lusts) is put off; the body of sin is so destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin; sin doth not reign in our mortal bodies, so that we (must) obey in the lusts thereof; we are renewed in the spirit of our minds; and do put on the new man, which is created according to God in righteousness and true holiness.

Our Sins also are very grievous Enemies of ours, loading us with heavy Guilt, stinging us with bitter Remorse, and anxious Fear, keeping us under miserable Bondage, exposing us to extreme Mischief and Misery; them our Lord hath also routed and vanquished: In regard to this Performance was the Name *Jesus* assigned to him; as the Angel told Joseph: *She shall bear a Son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins:* [From their sins; taking in all the Causes and the Consequences of them; from all those spiritual Enemies, which draw us, or drive us into them; from the Guilt and Obnoxiousness to Punishment; the Terror and Anguish of Conscience; the Wrath and Displeasure of God following upon them; the Slavery under their Dominion; the final Condemnation and Sufferance of grievous Pains for them;] the Guilt of Sin he particularly freed us from; for he loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. Christ died for Sinners (for us then being Sinners) that is, that he might deliver us from our Sins, with all their Causes, Adjuncts and Consequences. He bare our sins on his own body on the tree; the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin; he is the propitiation for our sins, and for the sins of the whole world; he was manifested to take away our sins; once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin (as ἀδήμον ἀσφάλειαν, to the abolition of sin) by the sacrifice of himself; we are justified freely by God's Grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; by his obedience many are constituted righteous (or free from the Guilt and Imputation of Sin) he justifies the ungodly; covering their sins, and not imputing them unto them. So doth he wipe away the Guilt of Sin; and he voids the Condemnation passed for them; for there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus; who is there that can condemn, since Christ hath died, or rather hath risen again?

He hath also appeased God's Wrath for Sin, and removed the Effects of it, (the Punishment and Vengeance due to Sin and threatened for it.) So that being enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: Jesus is the ὁ ἰσχυρὸς, who delivers us from the wrath to come; being justified by his blood, we shall be saved by him from wrath.

The Strength and Dominion of Sin he hath also broken; by the Grace afforded us, whereby we are able to resist and avoid it; so that sin henceforth shall not domineer over us, or reign in our mortal body: Being freed from sin we are enslaved to righteousness and made servants to God. The body of sin is destroyed; so that we no longer serve sin. Whence consequently he hath subdued, utterly weakened, or quite destroyed (as to any force or mischievous Influence upon us) those other Adversaries, which depend upon Sin, and by its Power oppose and afflict us.

Our Conscience is such an Enemy accusing us, condemning us, vexing us with the Memory and Sense of Sin; suggesting to us the Depth of our Guilt, and the Danger of our State, terrifying us with the Expectation of Punishment and Vengeance: But our Lord (by securing us of Mercy and Favour upon Repentance and sincere Obedience) hath silenced and stilled this Adversary; hath by his blood (as the Apostle to the Hebrews says) purged our conscience from dead works; hath delivered

John 17. 19.

Heb. 2. 10.

Rom. 8. 2.

2 Cor. 4. 6.

1 Cor. 2. 15.

1 John 2. 27.

Eph. 4. 8.

Rom. 12. 2.

1 John 5. 3.

Phil. 2. 13.

Phil. 4. 13.

2 Cor. 3. 5.

Heb. 13. 21.

Gal. 5. 24.

Coloss. 3. 5, 2.

11.

Eph. 4. 22.

Rom. 6. 6, 12.

Rom. 8. 13.

Heb. 12. 1.

Eph. 4. 23, 2.

10.

Coloss. 3. 10.

Heb. 12. 4.

Πεὶς ἀμαρτι-

αν ἀλλαγῶν

ζώων.

Matt. 1. 21.

Ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν  
τοῦ γένους τῶν ἀνθρώπων διὰ τὴν ἰδίαν πλάσας  
σαρκὸς καὶ αἰσθητικῆς καὶ σαρκὸς καὶ αἰσθητικῆς  
ὅλοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἡ ἀμαρτία ἐνχορτάσθαι  
πᾶσις ἀμαρτίας ἐλευθερώσῃ. Damascus  
Epist. apud Theod. 5. 9. 1 Tim. 1. 15.

Rev. 1. 5.

1 Pet. 1. 19.

1 Pet. 2. 24.

3. 18.

1 John 1. 7.

2. 2. 3. 5.

4. 10.

Heb. 1. 3. 9.

26, 28.

Rom. 3. 24.

Rom. 5. 19.

Rom. 4. 5, 6.

7.

Rom. 8. 1.

Rom. 8. 34.

Rom. 5. 10, 1.

1 Thes. 1. 10.

Rom. 5. 7.

Rom. 6. 14.

Rom. 6. 12.

Rom. 6. 18.

22.

Rom. 6. 6.

Heb. 9. 14. 2.

15.



livered them, who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage; so that thence we obtain a steady Peace of Mind, a joyful Satisfaction in the Service of God, a comfortable Hope of future Bliss: Peace, Comfort and Joy are the Adjuncts of that State he shall put us into, and the Fruits of that Spirit he bestoweth on us.

Gal. 2. 16. 3. The Law also (in its rigour, as requiring exact Obedience, and as denouncing  
 Heb. 7. 19. Vengeance to them who in any Point violate it;) is, by reason of our Weakness  
 Rom. 10. 5. and Inability so perfectly to observe it, an Enemy to us; justifying no Man, per-  
 Rom. 8. 3. fecting no Man, causing, encreasing, aggravating, quickning, declaring sin; yielding  
 Rom. 3. 20. occasion to sin of killing us, working wrath, ministering death and condemnation, subjecting  
 Gal. 3. 12. 5. 3. us to a curse (as St. Paul teacheth us) but our Lord by mitigating and abating the  
 Rom. 7. 13. extreme rigour thereof, by procuring an acceptance of sincere (though not accurate)  
 Rom. 4. 15. 3. Obedience, by purchasing and dispensing Pardon for Transgression thereof upon  
 20. 5. 20. 7. Repentance, by conferring competent Strength and Ability to perform it in an  
 7. 8. 10. 11. acceptable Degree, hath brought under this Adversary; hath redeemed us from the  
 1 Cor. 15. 56. curse of the law; hath justified and imputed righteousness to us without the works of the  
 2 Cor. 3. 7. 9. law (without such punctual Performances as the Law exacts) we are delivered from  
 Gal. 3. 12. the law (as to those Effects of it; the condemning, discouraging, enslaving us)  
 Rom. 3. 21. 28. we cease to be under the Law (in those respects) being under Grace, being led  
 Rom. 4. 6. by the Spirit (as St. Paul tells us.) The Law indeed is still our Rule, our Guide,  
 Rom. 7. 6. 4. our Governour; we are obliged to follow and obey it; but it ceases to be a Tyrant  
 Rom. 6. 14. over us, a Tormentor of us.  
 Gal. 5. 18.

1 Cor. 15. 26. Death is also an Enemy (the last Enemy, saith St. Paul, which shall be destroyed, is  
 Acts 2. 34. Death;) the Enemy, which naturally we most fear and abominate; that which  
 1 Cor. 15. 20. would utterly destroy us.

Acts 26. 23. This Enemy our Lord hath vanquished and destroyed: By his Death and Resur-  
 Col. 1. 18. rection he opened the way to a happy Immortality; he abolished Death, and brought  
 Apoc. 1. 5. Life and Immortality to Light by the Gospel: He by his death defeated him that had the  
 Acts 3. 15. Power of Death; and delivered them, who by fear of Death were through their whole  
 Apoc. 1. 5. Life subject to Bondage; he pulled out Sin, which is the Sting of Death, and re-  
 2 Tim. 1. 10. versed the Sentence of Condemnation, to which we all stood obnoxious. The  
 Heb. 2. 14. wages of Sin (that which we had deserved, and was by Law due to us for it)  
 Rom. 6. 23. was Death; but the Gift of God is everlasting Life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lastly Hell (that is utter Darknes, extreme Discomfort, intolerable and endless Misery) the most dismal of all Enemies, our Lord hath, by the Virtue of his Merits, and the Power of his Grace, put us into a Capacity of avoiding; he hath (as St. Paul before tells us) delivered us from the Wrath to come. O Hell, where is thy Victory? Death and Hell shall be cast into the Lake of Fire.

Thus hath our Lord in our Behalf vanquished and defeated every Thing that is opposite, or prejudicial to our Salvation and Welfare. Many indeed of these Things do in a more immediate, more peculiar, and more signal manner concern the faithful Members of the Christian Church, and are directly applied to them, yet all of them in some Sort, according to God's Design, and in respect to a remote Capacity, may be referred to all Men. They are Benefits which God intended for all Men, and which all Men (if they be not faulty and wanting to themselves) may obtain. How they more especially appertain to the Faithful, we may shew afterward.

### APPLICATION.

1. Hence ariseth great Matter and Cause of glorifying GOD; both from the Thing it self, and its Extent: For the Magnitude of Beneficence is to be estimated, not only according to the degree of Quality, but according to its amplitude of Object; to redeem Any doth signify Goodness, to redeem Many doth encrease it, to redeem All doth advance it to the highest Pitch; the more are obliged, the greater is the Glory due to the Benefactor.

Hence the Earth being full of the Goodness of the Lord, the Lord being gracious unto all, and his Mercy being over all his Works, all Creatures partaking of God's Bounty, is so often insisted upon in those divine Hymns, as a Ground of Praise to God.

Some



1. Some do indeed speak of glorifying God for his discriminating Grace; as if Grace the narrower it were, the better it were. But is not Selfishness and Envy at the bottom of this? Is not this the Disposition of those in the Gospel, who *murmured*—*Is this thy will, because mine is good?* Is not this the Disposition of those who say, It is dangerous to restrain God's Benevolence and Beneficence within Bounds narrower than they really are; thereby diminishing his Glory.

2. Hereby is discovered the general Obligation of Men to love God; to praise him, to serve him in sense of his Goodness, in regard to his Beneficence, out of Gratitude toward him. If God hath been so kindly affected toward Men, and so careful of their Welfare, as for procuring and promoting their Salvation to provide a *Saviour* for them, to design his own beloved Son to that Performance, in Prosecution thereof depressing him into so low a State, exposing him to such Inconveniences and Indignities, such Crosses and Afflictions, how much then are all Men obliged to love him, as their gracious Friend and Benefactor; to praise and celebrate him for his Favour and Mercy, to render all Blessings and Thanks unto him? This certainly is the Duty of all, if the Redemption in God's Design reach to all; otherwise in reality it lieth on few, in Practice it could scarce touch any. They cannot be obliged to thank God for their Redemption, who are not obliged to him for the Thing it self; they cannot heartily resent the Kindness, who are not assured that it extends to them: And to such Assurance (according to the Doctrine of particular Redemption) it is certain that very few Men, especially of the best Men, can arrive; it is a Question whether any Men arrive thereto.

Apoc. 4. 9.  
Eph. 1. 6.  
Col. 1. 12.

According to the Sense of all Men, it is also no easy Thing to know certainly, whether a Man at present be in the State of Grace: And he that doth not know that, cannot (except upon the Score of general Redemption) be assured that he is redeemed; and therefore cannot thank God.

It hath been the common Doctrine of *Christendom* for fifteen hundred Years together, that no Man (without a special Revelation) can in this Life be assured of his perseverance, and consequently not of his Salvation; and consequently not of his Election or Redemption, in Case only they who are saved are in the Design of God redeemed: No Man therefore without that special Revelation, can thank God heartily for his Redemption, as being uncertain thereof, it being a Secret reserved in God's Breast.

It is yet a farther Difficulty, supposing a Man to have a good Assurance of his present State, to be assured of his final Perseverance in it: Which he that hath not, cannot (except upon the said Score) thank God for it.

The best Men especially, who out of Modesty and Humility, are apt to doubt of their present State; who studying their Hearts, and discovering many Imperfections in themselves, who reflecting on their Lives, and observing in them many Defects, are apt to question whether they are qualified for God's Favour, or fitted for the future Account and Enjoyment of Heaven, who considering the treachery of their Hearts, the feebleness of their Reason, that unsteadiness of their Resolution, will be apt to fear they may fall away, will be render'd hence incapable to give God thanks for their Redemption: Only the bold and blind Bayards (who usually out of Self-conceit are so exceedingly confident of their Election and Salvation) will be able to praise God for it.

Hence the Assurance of Salvation happening to few, and of them to much fewer upon good grounds; it being necessary to none, it being perhaps (yet far more probably, according to the general Sense of *Christendom*) groundless to any; few or none are capable to render God Praise and Thanks for it: So shall he lose in effect all Thanks for the greatest Benefit he did ever confer on Mankind.

It is therefore a dangerous Opinion, which checketh their Gratitude, which stoppeth their Mouths from praising God; which so depriveth God of his due Praise. It is much more safe to praise God for the Benefits we conceive we have, but have not, than to neglect to praise him, for that we have.

3. This Doctrine doth afford great Matter of Comfort: If a Man reflecting on his own Heart and Ways (observing in them many Blemishes and Defects) is apt to be discouraged, yet it will raise him to consider, that he is not thereby excluded from a Possibility of Salvation, seeing he is assured of God's favourable Inclination, and who hath expressed so much good-Will and Favour toward him in his Redemption; seeing he is persuaded, that he hath a Saviour so kindly and pitifully



fully affected toward him; who wisheth him well; who is concerned in his Salvation, that he might not be crossed or defeated in his Designs, that he might not lose the Effects of his Endeavours, the Price of his Blood. But he that seeth himself in so doubtful a Condition, as to his own Qualifications, and withal hath no Assurance that God was ever graciously disposed toward him, cannot but thereby be much discouraged.

This Doctrine therefore is safe and useful, it can do no Man harm, it may do him great good by giving him hopes of being assisted and accepted of his Redeemer. But the other is dangerous, as tending to discourage and deject Men.

4. This Doctrine is a great incitement to the performance of Duty; both as working upon Men's Ingenuity, and disposing them in Gratitude to serve God, from the resentment of their Obligation for so great a Favour; and as assuring them of acceptance in case of endeavour to obey. How can he but be moved willingly to serve God, who hath an apprehension of God's such merciful Design to save him? Of his having done so much in order thereto?

But how can he be moved to serve God in consideration of such a Benefit, who is ignorant of its being intended him? How can any Man apply himself cheerfully to serve that Master, whose favourable Inclination toward him, whose Readiness to accept his Service he doubteth of.

1 Cor. 6. 20.

1 Pet. 1. 17.

The Apostles propound it as a Ground of Gratitude, and an Obligation to the Performance of Duty, that they are redeemed by Christ; which supposeth they do all know and believe it.

Supposing Christ is not the Redeemer of all but of those only, who shall be finally saved, these grounds of Thankfulness and enforcements of Duty cannot properly or pertinently respect all Christians, and indeed only those who are sure of their Salvation.

My thanking Christ for his redeeming me, my diligently serving him as my Redeemer, supposeth my Opinion, and is grounded upon the Truth of his being really so: — I cannot heartily, confidently or comfortably do it, except I know it, and am assured thereof: Which I cannot do except Christ died for all Men, or that I am assured of my particular Election.

So that either CHRIST is an universal Saviour, or the greatest Part of Christians are disobliged and incapacitated reasonably to thank him, to praise him, to serve him, as they are enjoined to do.

5. It is a great Aggravation of Infidelity, of Apostasy, of all Disobedience, that we are guilty of them, do frustrate the Designs and Undertakings of Christ, do reject the Overtures of his Grace, do abuse the Goodness and Mercy of their Redeemer; it consequently deterreth from those Things.

Luke 7. 30.

The Pharisees and Lawyers rejected the Counsel of God toward them (God therefore designed their good.)

Heb. 2. 3.

How shall we escape that neglect so great Salvation? A Salvation which they were capable of, which was designed for them, which was offered to them; otherwise there would have been no Danger in neglecting it, no Fault in doing it.

Acts 13. 26.

46.

It is said of the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia, that they did, ἀνυπόκριτος, thrust away the Gospel (the word of Salvation, that was sent them) judging themselves unworthy of eternal Life: God did think fit out of Goodness seriously to offer it to them, but they did not think fit to embrace it.

2 Pet. 3. 9.

Rom. 2. 23.

Despise thou the riches of God's goodness? How can any Man despise that which doth not concern him, which never was offered him, which at least he hath no ground of Confidence, that it extendeth to him?

John 5. 34. 38.

These things I speak that ye may be saved: So our Lord saith to those—who did not believe in him.

Matt. 23. 37.

2 Pet. 2. 1.

How often have I willed? &c.

Denying the Lord that bought them.

6. It is a great encouragement and excitement to Devotion. Who can be backward of having recourse to his Redeemer; or of using his Mediation? Whom will not such an Experiment of Goodness invite and encourage?

But the contrary Apprehension must needs damp Devotion, and discourage from it. He can apply himself to God but faintly, and distrustfully, who distrusteth whether he hath any Redeemer or Mediatour or no. Who must thus conceive and say to himself: Perhaps God hath loved me, and perhaps he never had nor will



will have any regard to my Welfare. Perhaps *Christ* died with intention to do me good, perhaps he never did mean any such thing: Perhaps those Expressions of kindness sounding so generally do not include me, perhaps I am excluded, and only deluded by them. When a Man cannot say to *Christ*, O my Saviour!—O my Mediatour! &c. nor use his Intercession with God for the Procurement of Faith, of Grace, of any good Thing.

7. It is a ground and motive of Charity; there arising thence a more considerable relation between all Men; being all the Objects of *Christ's* Love and Mercy, should endear Men to one another; it rendereth every Man valuable in our Eyes, as dear and precious in God's sight. It should make his Salvation desirable to us.

*Pray for all Men, saith St. Paul.*

The contrary Opinion removeth this ground of Charity; and so cooleth it.

8. It should consequently render us careful to promote the Salvation of others, and fearful to hinder it by ill Example, by ill Doctrine, by any Misbehaviour. So doth *St. Paul* argue, when he saith, *Destroyest thou him for whom Christ died?*

9. It is a Piece of Justice to acknowledge the Right and Interest of every Man in his Saviour.

A Wrong to exclude any; to confine and appropriate this great Blessing; to engross, to enclose a Common; to restrain that by forging Distinctions, which is so unlimitedly expressed.

The Undertakings and Performances of our Saviour did respect all Men as the common Works of Nature do; as the Air we breath in, as the Sun which shineth on us; the which are not given to any Man particularly, but to all generally; not as a proper Inclosure, but as a Common—they are indeed mine, but not otherwise than as they do belong to all Men.

A Gift they are to all equally, though they do not prove to all a Blessing; there being no common Gift, which by the Refusal, Neglect, or ill Use of it may not prove a Curse—a *Savour of Death*.

## SERMON XLIII.

### The NATIVITY of our LORD, Tidings of great Joy.

LUKE II. 10.

*And the Angel said unto them, Fear not, for Behold, I bring you Tidings of great Joy, which shall be to all People.*

Ἰδὲ δὲ ἰσχυρὸν  
ἡλεῖσθαι χαρὰν  
ἐν μεγάλῳ,  
ὅτις ἔσται πᾶσι  
τῷ λαῷ.

**T**HE proper Business of a Festival is spiritual Joy, conceived in our Hearts, by reflection on some notable Blessing conferred on us; accompanied with a grateful Sense and Expression, answerable to the special Bounty and Mercy of God, in due proportion to the Nature and Degree of that Blessing.

Such Joy is a Duty, or a Part of religious Devotion, required by God, <sup>1 Thess. 5. 16.</sup> and very acceptable to him; for as God would have his Servants perpetually content, well satisfied, and chearful in all States, and upon all Occurrences; so he doth especially demand from us, that we should entertain his Favours with Delight and Complacence; it being proper, it being seemly, it being just so to do; <sup>Rom. 12. 12.</sup> <sup>Phil. 4. 4.</sup>



for since Joy is a natural result of our obtaining whatever we do apprehend good, or esteem and affect; the Conception of it is a plain Argument, that we do well understand, do rightly prize, do cordially like, do thankfully embrace God's Favours; as on the contrary, a Defect of it doth imply, that we do not mind them, or take them to be little worth, that we do not sensibly relish them, or accept them kindly. And if ever we are obliged, if ever we are concerned so to rejoice, then surely it is now; when the fairest Occasion, and highest Cause of Joy, that ever was, is presented to us; when certain News from Heaven, and the best that ever came from thence, of the most admirable, the most glorious, the most beneficial Event, that ever happened in the World, is in a manner suitably rare conveyed to us; for, *Behold*, saith the Angel, *I bring you Tidings of great Joy, which shall be to all People.*

Upon which Words (each whereof is emphatical, and pregnant with Matter observable) we shall first make a brief Descant or Paraphrase, supplying the room of a curious Analysis; then we shall urge the main Duty couched in them.

*Behold*: This is a Word denoting *Admiration*, exciting *Attention*, intimating Assurance: *Behold*, and *admire*; it is no mean, no ordinary Matter, that I report, but a most remarkable, a very marvellous Event: *Behold* and *attend*; it is a Business not to be passed over with small Regard, but most worthy your Consideration, of high Moment, and Concernment, to you. *Behold*, and *see*; 'tis no uncertain, no obscure Thing; but that whereof you may be fully assured, as if it were most evident to your Sense, and which by conspicuous Proofs shall be demonstrated; in the mean while you have no slight Authority for it: For

*Εὐαγγελίζομαι*, *I bring good Tidings*; I, an Angel, a special Messenger of God purposely sent on this Errand, that by the Strangeness of my Apparition I may excite you to regard it, by the Weight of my Testimony I may incline you to believe it; by the Dignity of my Nature I may declare the Importance of it: I, a faithful Servant of God, and a kind Friend to Men, very willing at his Command to perform good Offices to them, do bring a Message, well becoming an Angel's Mouth, worth my Descent from Heaven, and putting on this visible Shape: For *I bring*

*Εὐαγγελίζομαι χαρὰν μεγάλην*, *good Tidings of great Joy*: I bring *Tidings*, that may gratify the Curiosity of any Man, the Mind of Man naturally being greedy of News; *good Tidings*, those are welcome to all Men, and apt to yield more Pleasure, than any Knowledge we had before: *Tidings of Joy*; such as may not only minister a dry Satisfaction to your Reason, but sensibly touch your Affections, by the comfortable Nature, and beneficial Tendency of them: *Tidings of great Joy*; as not touching any indifferent or petty Business, but Affairs of nearest Concernment, and highest Consequence to you: (such indeed, as you shall understand, which do concern not the poor Interests of this World, not the sorry Pleasures of Sense, not any slender Advantage of your present Life, and temporal State; but your spiritual Welfare, your everlasting Condition, the future Joy and Happiness of your Souls) *Tidings* indeed the most glad some that ever sounded upon Earth, that ever entered into Mortal Ear: These *I bring*

*ὑμῖν*, *to you*: to you *shepherds*; Persons of mean Condition, and simple Capacity, leading this innocent and humble sort of Life, employed in your honest Vocation, undergoing toilsome Labour, and sore Hardship; witness the open Field, witness the cold Season, witness the dark Night in which I find you watching, and guarding your Sheep; to you, who could expect no very welcome Tidings; who are little concerned in any great Transactions; and can have small Ambition or Hope of bettering your Condition by any Changes here; even to you (not in the first Place to the mighty *Princes*, to the crafty *Statesman*, to the sage *Philosophers*, or learned *Rabbies*, to the wealthy *Merchants*, or fine *Citizens*, who now are warm in their Houses, enjoying their Ease and Pleasure; reposing on their Beds, or sitting by their Fires, or revelling at their Banquets and Sports; but to you) poor, harmless, silly, industrious Souls; who well may represent the greater and better Part of Mankind, in this surprising and absolute free Way, the gracious Lord of Heaven by me his special Minister doth vouchsafe to send from thence *Tidings of great joy*: Which shall be

*Pauperibus at-  
que vigilantibus,  
Sc. Bern.  
de Nat. Serm.  
5.  
Luke 2. 8.*



Πᾶσι τοῖς λαοῖς, to all people; or rather to all the people; that is to God's ancient and peculiar People, in regard to which it is said, *I was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*; to that People I say especially, primarily, and more immediately this Joy did appertain; it by a closer Relation to God, and special Interest in his Promises having plainest Title thereto; it from anticipations of Knowledge, Faith and Hope, being more capable to admit such an Overture; it indeed being the Representative of all the spiritual Israel, or faithful Seed of Abraham, for whom the Benefits which these Tidings import were designed; to it first indeed, but mediately and consequentially to all People dispersed on the Face of the Earth: The Expression seemeth adapted to the present Conceits of that Nation, which apprehended nothing about God's favourable Intentions to the Community of Men; but in effect it is to be understood extensively in reference to all People: For the Saviour, the Christ, the Lord, of whom this good News did report, was not only to be the Redeemer, and Governour of that small People, but of the World, of every Nation, of all Mankind: Here indeed we have *πᾶσι τοῖς λαοῖς, to all the people*; but in the *nunc dimittis* of old Simeon, we have *πάντων ὧν λαῶν, of all the peoples*; *Mine eyes (said he) have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of the peoples*: As he was the glory of his people Israel; as in him God did visit and redeem that his people; so he was made a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be for salvation to the uttermost ends of the earth; He was the expectation of Israel; but he was likewise the desire of all nations; He was destin'd to rule in Sion; but the Heathen also were given for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession; He was the root of Jesse, which should stand for an ensign of the people, to which the Gentiles should seek; He was that Royal person, of whom the Psalmist did sing, *Men shall be blessed in him, all nations shall call him blessed*.

He was to be born by Nation a Jew, but a Man by Nature; the Son of man, was a Stile which he commonly did own, and affect no less than the Son of Abraham, or of David; he was born indeed under the law, but of a woman; and therefore brother to us all, as partaker of the same flesh and blood; Hence was he endued with an human Compassion, and with a fraternal Affection toward all Men; hence was he disposed to extend the Benefit of his charitable and gracious Performances unto them all.

Judea therefore must not engross this angelical Gospel; it is of Importance most universal and unlimited, reaching through all successions of Time, and all extensions of Place; filling all Ages and Regions of the World, with matter, and with obligation of Joy: Hence even by Moses antiently (according to St. Paul's Interpretation) were all Nations upon this Account invited to a common Joy; Rejoice, said he, *O ye nations with his people*. Hence, in foresight of this event, the Holy Psalmist (as the Fathers expound him) did sing, *The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of Isles be glad thereof*: Hence Sing, *O thou barren, thou that didst not bear, break forth into singing and cry aloud, thou that didst not travel with child*---*The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose*---*Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth*, said the Evangelical Prophet in regard to this dispensation; In fine, this Angel himself did interpret his own Words, when in consort with the heavenly Choir he sang that Anthem, *Glory be to God in the highest; on earth peace, and good-will toward men*; whence we may collect that a Peace diffused over the Earth, and a Good-will extended toward all Men were implied in these tidings of great joy to all people.

We then are all concerned in these Tidings, and we may look on them as by this heavenly Evangelist imparted to us; whence our Duty must be to listen with reverent Attention unto them, seriously to weigh the Purport of them, diligently to contemplate the Reasons of that great Joy, which effectually should be produced in us by them, as their proper and due result; to further which Practice, let us take some Prospect of this Gospel, whereby it may appear pleasant, and apt to kindle a sprightly Joy in our Hearts. The Matter of it, is the Nativity of our ever blessed Lord, and Saviour Jesus Christ; for, *To you, saith our Angel, is born this day a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord*, an Occurrence fraught with all the greatest Causes of Joy imaginable; as importing innumerable, unexpressibly and unconceivably vast Advantages thence springing to us.

Matt. 15. 24.  
10. 6.  
Rom. 9. 4.  
Luke 24. 47.  
Acs 13. 46.  
Isa. 2. 3.  
Zech. 9. 9.  
Rom. 9. 4.

Luke 2. 31.

Luke 2. 32.

1. 68.

Acs 13. 47.

Isa. 49. 6. 42. 8.

Luke 2. 38.

Hag. 2. 7.

Psal. 2. 8.

Mic. 5. 2.

Isa. 11. 10.

Psal. 72. 17.

Gal. 4. 4.

Heb. 2. 14.

Rom. 15. 10.

Deut. 32. 43.

Psal. 97. 1. 96. 1.  
Τὴν πρεσβειαν τῶ σωτῆρος ἐπιφανεῖς  
παραγγέλλει.  
Totum ad Christum revocemus, si vo-  
lumus iter recta intelligentia tenere.  
Aug. in Ps. 96. 7.  
Isa. 54. 1. 35. 1. 42. 10.

Luke 2. 14.



It doth minister occasion of Rejoycing for all the Blessings which did flow from each of his salutary Undertakings and Performances; for all the Mercies purchased by the Merits of his Obedience, and by the Price of his Blood; for all the Graces issuing from his dispensation of the *Holy Spirit*; for all the Benefits consequent on his illustrious Resurrection, Ascension and Glorification; as being a good Entrance to them, yea, a great Progress in them, and a certain Pledge of their full Accomplishment; for all the Work of our Redemption was in a manner achieved, when our Saviour did appear; his Incarnation was the great Step toward it; as being an Act of the humblest Obedience, and of the highest Merit, that could anywise be performed, for satisfying the Justice of God, and winning his Favour toward us: His *taking up life* may well seem more meritorious, than his *laying it down*, and the chief Passion which he could ever undergo; His Death was a Passion, great as Death could be; His Life also was a continual Passion, or Exercise of huge Patience; but his Birth seemeth to be the greatest and strangest Passion of all; involving the lowest Submission, and the deepest Suffering: What nobler Sacrifice could there be, than God's offering himself up to Mortality, to Infirmary, to Slavery? What Obedience can be thought of comparable to that which he did express when he said, *Lo I come to do thy will, O God: I came down, not that I might do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.* For him to descend from Heaven, the Region of Light and Bliss, into this gloomy and sad World, for him in a manner to divest himself of celestial Majesty, and to assume the Form of a Servant; for him to be enclosed in a Womb, and to come out wailing thence, to suck at a

Heb. 10. 7.  
John 6. 38.

Phil. 2. 7, 8.

ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν, ἑαυτὸν ὑπατάναςεν.

Ἡ περὶ τῆς σαρκὸς ἐκείνης  
ἐν πάσι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. Ath. Or. 3.  
c. Arr. p. 385. vid. p. 618.

Δύχρον ἦν τὸ ἐκείνης σῶμα, &c.  
Greg. Naz. Or. 38.

Creatoris ad creaturam descensio cre-  
dendum est ad aeterna provectio. Leo  
M. de Nat. Serm. 5.

Breast for Life, to be carried in Arms, and laid in a Manger; to enter on a Stage of Being so very low and homely; for him, I say, *the Lord of Glory*, thus to empty, and abase himself, may not this reasonably be deemed more than after his becoming Man to sustain all the Grievances incident to our Nature and State? Whence *the very assumption of flesh was* (saith St. Athanasius) *the redemption of all mankind*: He was at least thence engaged in the Way of acting and suffering what-ever was needful for our Recovery; and having gone so far, assuredly he never would flinch or recoil, but would go through with all; being come, he would shew himself come to purpose, leaving no Part unfinished of his grand Design.

So that as they, who celebrate the Birth of a Prince, do mean thereby to express their Joy for all the Good which they do hopefully presume to enjoy from his Protection and Conduct afterward in all his life; and as they who welcome the Sun-rising, do imply their Satisfaction in the Conveniencies of his Light through the whole ensuing Day; so may the *Nativity* of our Lord afford Matter of rejoycing for all the train of mighty Blessings which do succeed it. We may therefore now well consider him born to instruct us by his excellent Doctrine, and to guide us by his perfect Example; born to merit God's Mercy and Favour toward us by an entire submission to God's Pleasure, in the whole Conduct of his Life, and in the final Resignation of it: Born to renew and sanctify our Nature, to support and strengthen us in Obedience to God's Commandments, to succour us in Temptations, to comfort us in Distresses by his Grace; Born to rear himself from the Grave for confirming our Faith, and ensuring our Hopes of Salvation; Born to ascend up above all the Heavens to God's right Hand, there effectually to intercede for us, thence liberally to dispense all heavenly Blessings to us: Well may we now rejoice, as seeing him come to disclose the Way of Happiness, to establish the Covenant of Grace, to void all the Obstructions, and subdue all the Enemies to our Welfare: Well may we celebrate this Birth, as by its virtue blessing the *Patriarchs*, enlightning the *Prophets*, inspiring the *Martyrs* with Faith and Courage, endowing all the *Saints*, that e'er have been, with Grace, and crowning them with Glory; so that in this Day we have the *Passion*, the *Pasch*, the *Ascension*, the *Pentecost*, the *Memorials* of every *Saint* suggested to us; the Joys of all our *Festivals* do conspire or commence in this; which is the Head and Spring, which is

Οὐκ ἔν τῇ τῇ  
τῇ Πάσχα κα-  
τὰ τὴν περὶ  
τὴν ἡμέραν  
εὐφροσύνης μέ-  
ρος. Greg.  
Nyss.

Greg. Nyss.  
Tom. 2. p. 784.

πάντα ταῦτα ἡ πα-  
ρὸς ἡμετέρας χάρις ἔστιν αὐτῇ ᾧ ἡμετέρας ἀγαθῶν. All these things (saith St. Gregory Nyssen) are the grace of this present day, for it began the goods which did in order succeed.

But



But waving the numberless Benefits so consequent on the *Nativity*, we shall only touch some of those which have a more formal and close Relation thereto.

I pass over the Contemplation of that sweet Harmony between the old, and the new World; in which, to our comfortable Satisfaction, the sweetest Attributes of God (his Goodness, his Wisdom, his Fidelity and Constancy) do illustrate themselves, by Completion of the ancient Promises, Prefigurations and Predictions touching this Event.

I forbear also to reflect on the happy Alteration and Amendment of the World, which our Lord's Coming did induce, by comparing the State of Things before it, with that which followed it; the Consideration of which Case is very pleasant, and productive of Joy. First then,

1. Let us consider, that the *Nativity* doth import the Completion of many ancient Promises, Predictions and Prefigurations concerning it; that whereas all former Dispensations of Favour and Mercy were as Preludes or Preambles to this; the *Old Law* did aim to represent it in its mysterious Poms; the chief of providential Occurrences did intimate it; the Prophets often in their mystical Raptures did allude to it, and often in clear Terms did express it; the gracious Designs of God, and the longing Expectations of Mankind being so variously implied in regard thereto; now all is come to be fulfilled, and perfected in most clear, most effectual, most substantial Accomplishment: Now is sprung up that seed of the woman, which according to the first Gospel preached to Abraham, should bruise the serpent's head; Now is the mystical Isaac, the miraculous Son of promise born; Now is that grant to Abraham, In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed, made good; Now is Shiloh come, of whom Jacob foreboded, unto him the gatherings of the people shall be; Now is that Oracle of Moses more than verified, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like to me, him shall ye hear; Now the star is come out of Jacob, the Vision whereof dazzled Balaam, and stopped him from cursing that People, in which it should arise; Now is that Cath discharged, to David, Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne; Now those illustrious Predictions of Isaiah, There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse—A Virgin shall conceive and bear a son; to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be on his shoulders; There shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn ungodliness from Jacob, are fully accomplished: Now the righteous branch (of which Jeremy and Zachary spake) is sprouted forth; And Ezekiel's One Shepherd, Daniel's Son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven; Micah's Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from old; Haggai's Desire of all nations; Malachi's Angel of the Covenant, and Son of Righteousness have all in truth appeared: Now is that glorious King and Captain arrived, whom the holy Oracles do so magnificently describe; whom Moses and Joshua, whom David and Solomon in so many past Circumstances did foreshadow; whom God would set upon his holy hill of Zion; The scepter of whose Kingdom is a mighty scepter; who should raise the tabernacle of David that is fallen; before whom all Kings should fall down, and whom all nations should serve; who should reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of whose Kingdom there shall be no end.

Now what can be more delightful, or satisfactory to our Mind, than to reflect on this sweet Harmony of Things, this goodly Correspondence between the old and new World; wherein so pregnant Evidences of God's chief Attributes (of his Goodness, of his Wisdom, of his Fidelity and Constancy) all conspiring to our Benefit do shine? Is it not pleasant to contemplate how provident God hath ever been for our Welfare? What Trains from the World's beginning, or ever since our unhappy fall he hath been laying to repair and restore us? How wisely he hath ordered all Dispensations with a convenient reference and tendency to this Masterpiece of Grace? How steady he hath been in prosecuting his Designs, and how faithful in accomplishing his Promises concerning it?

If the holy Patriarchs did see this Day, and were glad; if a Glimpse thereof did cause their Hearts \* to leap within them; if its very dawn had on the Spirits of the Prophets so vigorous an Influence; what Comfort and Complacency should we feel in this its real Presence, and bright Aspect on us? How sensibly should we be

*Sapientia & benignitas Dei ac salutiferi operis mora capaxiores nos sua vocationis effecit, ut quod multis signis, multis vocibus, multisque mysteriis per tota saecula pronuntiatum, in his diebus Evangelii non esset ambiguum.* Leo P. de Nat. Serm. 3.

Gen. 3. 15.  
22. 18.  
Gal. 3. 8. 16.  
Gen. 49. 10.  
Deut. 18. 15.  
Acts 3. 22.  
7. 37.  
Num. 24. 16.  
Psalm. 132. 11.  
Luke 1. 33.  
Is. 11. 1. 7. 14.  
9. 6. 59. 20.  
Rom. 11. 26.  
Jer. 22. 5.  
33. 15.  
Zech. 3. 8.  
6. 12.  
Ezek. 34. 23.  
37. 25.  
Dan. 7. 13.  
Mic. 5. 2.  
Matt. 2. 6.  
Hag. 2. 7.  
Mal. 3. 1. 4. 2.  
Ps. 2. 6. 45. 6.  
72. 11.  
Acts 15. 16.  
Am. 9. 11.  
Luke 1. 13.  
Dan. 7. 13.  
Mic. 4. 7.  
Aug. in Ps. 96.

*Non itaque novo consilio Deus rebus humanis, nec serâ miseratione consuluit, sed à constitutione mundi unam eandemque omnibus causam salutis instituit.* Leo P. de Nat. Serm. 3.

\* *ἤσανιδοντο.*  
*Magnam enim jucunditatem tunc carpebant ipsi Sancti Prophetae, cum ea videbant in Spiritu, non jam impleta, sed adhuc futura.* Aug. in Ps. 96.

affected



affected with this our happy Advantage above them : the which our Lord himself then did teach us to estimate duly, when he said, *Blessed are your Eyes, for they see; and your Ears, for they hear: for verily I say unto you, that many Prophets and righteous Men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.*

2. Let us consider what Alteration our Lord's coming did induce, by comparing the State of Things before it to that which followed it. The old World then consisting of two Parts, severed by a strong Wall of Partition, made up of Difference in Opinion, in Practice, in Affection, together with a strict Prohibition to one of holding intercourse with the other.

Of one, and that far the greater Part, St. Paul hath given us these Descriptions and Characters; *They were aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the Covenant, having no hope, and being without God in the World; They were by nature the Children of Wrath, and of Disobedience; They were dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of this World, according to the Prince of the power of the Air, the Spirit that worketh in the children of Disobedience; They did walk in the vanity of their Mind, having their Understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the Ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their heart; and being past feeling, did give themselves over unto*

2.3. *lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness; They had their Conversation in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind; being foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another: Such was the Case (the dismally wretched Case) of the Gentile World; such were our Forefathers (such after them of course, by fatal Consequence, should we have been) They were in*

*their Minds blinded with gross Ignorance, and deluded with foul Errors; they were in their Wills and Affections corrupted with great Disorder, Perverseness, Sensuality, Malice; they did in their Conversation practice all Sorts of Impiety, Iniquity and Impurity; their Conceptions of God were very unworthy, and their Worship answerably such (full of sottish, savage, beastly Superstitions) their Principles were vain, and their Life conformably dissolute; in short, they lived under the domination and influence of wicked Spirits, who thence are stiled Lords and Princes of this World, of this Air, of this secular Darkness: Even of the wisest among them (the number of whom, notwithstanding the Clatter their Writings made, was very small and inconsiderable) of those who by the Conduct of*

*natural Light strove to disengage themselves from vulgar Mistakes and Miscarriages, the Case was little better; for even their Minds (after all their studious Disquisitions and Debates) proved dark and giddy; full of Ignorance, of Error, of Doubt in regard to the main Points of Religion, and of Morality; some of them flatly denying the Existence, or (which in Effect is the same) the Providence of God; the natural Distinction between Good and Evil, the spiritual Nature and future Subsistence of our Souls, the Dispensation of Rewards and Punishments after this Life; others wavering in doubt, or having but faint Persuasions about these Matters; few or none having clear Notions, or steady Opinions about any such things; whence their Practice, in Correspondence to their Rules, must needs have been very loose, or very lame; so that well might our Apostle say of them, They became vain in their reasonings, and their foolish Heart was darkened; professing themselves wise, they became fools; And as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate Mind, to do those things which are not convenient.*

As for the other Part, or little Parcel of Men, the Condition of that was also very low; if the rest of the World did lie in dark Night, they did live but in a dusky Twilight; their Religion was much wrapt up in Shadow and Mystery; they had but dilute Ideas of God's Nature, and scant Discoveries of his Will; their Law or Rule of Practice, in divers respects was defective and infirm; they were lock'd under the Discipline of childish Rudiments, suiting their raw Capacities, and under the Bondage of slavish Yokes besitting their stubborn Dispositions; which Defailances in Notion their Practice commonly did out-strip; being fond, corrupt, hypocritical, void of interior, substantial and genuine Righteousness;

as



as the old Prophets did often complain, and as our Lord, with his Apostles, did urge.

Such was the State of the World in its Parts, and jointly of the whole it may be said, that it was *shut up under Sin and Guilt; under Darknes and Weakness, under Death and Corruption, under Sorrow and Woe*: That no full Declaration of God's Pleasure, no clear Overture of Mercy, no express Grant of spiritual Aid, no certain Redemption from the Filth, or the Force of Sin, from the Stroke of Death, from due Punishment hereafter; no Encouragements suitable to high Devotion, or strict Virtue, were any-wise in a solemn way exhibited or dispensed before our Lord's Appearance: So that well might all Men be then represented as *Cimmerians, sitting in Darknes, in the region and shadow of Death*; well may we suppose all Ages foregoing to have teemed with hope, and desire of this happy Day; or that (as St. Paul saith) *the whole Creation (that is, all Mankind) groaneth together, and travaileth together until now*; as labouring with Pangs of implicit Desire, or under a painful Sense of needing a Saviour; well might Esay thus proclaim his coming; *Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee; for behold Darknes shall cover the Land, and grosse Darknes the People; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his Glory shall be seen upon thee, and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and Kings to the brightness of thy rising*: For, Now, the Lord hath made known his Salvation, his Righteousness hath been openly shewed in the sight of the heathen; The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the Nations, and all the ends of the Earth do see the Salvation of our God.

Now we are all Children of the Light, and of the Day; all do know God from the least to the greatest; the rarest, the deepest Notions are grown common and obvious; every Child is instructed in the highest Truths, every Peasant is become a great Philosopher (beyond Aristotle or Plato, or Epictetus) skilful of the best Knowledge, able to direct his Life in the best way, capable of obtaining the best good.

Now the Spirit of God (the Spirit of Direction, of Succour, of Comfort spiritual) is poured upon all Flesh. Now the Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all Men; fully instructing them in their Duty, and strongly enabling them to perform it, freely offering them Mercy, mightily encouraging them with hopes of most blessed Rewards.

Now Jew and Gentile are re-united and compacted in one Body; walking in the same Light, and under Obligation to the same Laws; sharing in a common Redemption and Inheritance; being inseparably linked together with the Bands of Faith, of Charity, of spiritual Fraternity; thus old Things are passed away, behold all Things are become new, in Virtue and Consequence of our Lord's appearance: In Contemplation of which so great, so general, so happy a Change, how can we forbear to rejoyce?

But farther, that we may yet more nearly touch the Point:

3. Let us consider that the Nativity of our Lord is a grand Instance, a pregnant Evidence, a rich Earnest of Almighty God's very great Affection and Benignity toward Mankind: For, *In this (saith St. John) the love of God was manifested, that God sent his only begotten Son into the world*; and, *Through the tender mercies of our God (saith old Zachary) the day spring from on high did visit us*: This indeed is the peculiar Experiment, wherein that most divine Attribute did shew and signalize itself. The Power of God doth brightly shine in the Creation, the Wisdom of God may clearly be discerned in the Government of Things; but the Incarnation of God is that work, is that dispensation of Grace, wherein the divine Goodness doth most conspicuously display it self: How indeed possibly could God have demonstrated a greater excess of Kindness toward us, than by thus for our sake and good sending his dearest Son out of his Bosom into this fordid and servile Estate, subjecting him to all the Infirmities of our frail Nature, exposing him to the worst Inconveniencies of our low Condition? What Expressions can signify, what Comparisons can set out the stupendous vastness of this Kindness? If we should imagine, that a great Prince should put his only Son (a Son most lovely, and worthily most beloved) into Rags, should dismiss him from his

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Court,

*Apparuerat antè potentia in rerum creatione, apparebat sapientia in earum gubernatione, sed benignitas misericordia nunc maxime apparuit in humanitate.* Bern. de Nat. Serm. 1.

*Semper quidem diversis modis, multisque mensuris humano generi bonitas divina consulit, & plurima providentia sua munera omnibus retrò seculis clementer impartiit; sed in novissimis temporibus omnem abundantiam solita benignitatis excessit; quando in Christo ipsa ad peccatores misericordia, ipsa ad errantes veritas, ipsa ad mortuos vita descendit.* Sc. P. Leo M. de Nat. Serm. 4.

(Psalm. 36. 6. 108. 4.)

Gal. 3. 22.  
Rom. 11. 32.  
3. 9. 19.

Isa. 9. 1.  
Matt. 4. 15.

Rom. 8. 22.

Isa. 60. 1.

Psalm. 98. 2.

1 Thess. 5. 4.  
2 Cor. 3. 18.  
4. 6.

Heb. 8. 11.

Jer. 31. 33.

Acts 2. 17.

Joel 2. 16.

Tit. 2. 11.

Luke 24. 47.

Eph. 3. 6.

2. 15.

2 Cor. 5. 17.

Διόσδοτος.

Heb. 9. 10.

1 John 4. 9.

John 3. 16, 17.

Eph. 2. 4.

Luke 1. 78.



Court, should yield him up into the hardest Slavery, merely to the intent that he thereby might redeem from Captivity the meanest and basest of his Subjects, how faint a resemblance would this be of that immense Goodness, of that incomparable Mercy, which in this instance the King of all the World hath declared toward us his poor Vassals, his indeed unworthy Rebels.

And what greater Reason of Joy can there be, than such an Assurance of his Love, on whose Love all our Good dependeth, in whose Love all our Felicity consisteth? What can be more delightful than to view the Face of our Almighty Lord so graciously smiling upon us?

Should we not be extremely glad, should we not be proud, if our earthly Prince by any singular Mark would express himself kindly affected to us? How much more should we resent such a Testimony of God's Favour; how worthily may our Souls be transported with a Sense of such Affection.

4. We may consider our Lord's Nativity, as not only expressing simple Goodwill, but implying a perfect Reconciliation, a firm Peace, a steady Friendship established between God and us; or that it did not only proceed from Love, but did also produce Love to us. We did stand at a great Distance, in estrangement, yea in enmity toward God; our first Parents had by presumptuous Disobedience revolted from him; and we insisting on the Footsteps of their Apostasy continued in defiance of him; all men had sinned, and fallen short of the glory of God; There was not a righteous man upon earth that did good, and sinned not; whence unavoidably the Wrath of the most holy God was incensed, the Justice of the most righteous Lord was enraged against us; thence did issue a sad Doom, thence a just Sentence of capital Punishment was denounced on us; on pretence of Favour, no over-

ture of Peace, no hope of redress did then appear; we nowise being able to expunge our Guilt, to repair our Offences, to recover out of that corruption in the Mind and Will, which did seal us up to ruin, indisposing us either to find, or to entertain Mercy; But our Lord's coming did appease that Anger, did mollify that Justice, did suspend that Condemnation, did close the Breach, and *slay the enmity*; God (as the Apostle speaketh) *sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, did condemn sin in the flesh*: For, how can God now avert his Face from us, whom his only dear Son hath vouchsafed to make and own for his brethren? How can he look with an Eye of Displeasure on that nature, wherewith that Son of his Love standeth clothed before him? How can he abide, offended with our Race, in which pure Innocence and perfect Obedience are found; he now appearing with us, and for us, in whom not the strictest Justice, nor the shrewdest Malice can descry any Fault or Blemish; in whom therefore God is thoroughly well-pleased? Since we have *Emanuel, God with us*,—God manifested in our flesh. The Lord our righteousness partaker of our Infirmary, Intercessour and Advocate for his own Flesh and Blood, ready to do and suffer whatever God pleaseth to require on our Behalf, how can God be against us? Shall God and Man persist at distance or disaffection, who are so closely related, who are indeed so intimately united in one Person?

Ἀδύνατον γίγνεται τῇ φύσει λογικῇ ἕσθαι, καὶ ἡμῶν ἀμαρτησίαν, καὶ ὑπὸ καταδίκην θανάτου γινόμενῃ ἑαυτοὺς ἀπακαλῶσαι εἰς ἡλευθερίαν. Ath. p. 638.

Ἀδύνατον ἴτερος τὰ κατὰ ἐξὸς ἀναμάρτητον ἐπ' ἀνθρώπων φύσεως παρὰ δεχθῆναι εἰ μὴ διὸς ἐν σαρκὶ πισυνοῦτο εἶναι, ὃ τὴν ἀναμάρτητον δικαιοσύνην εἰς κόσμον εἰσαγαγόν, &c. Ath. de Incarn. Verbi.

Eph. 2. 15, 16.

Rom. 8. 3. 2 Cor. 5. 19.

Τὸ πρὸς Ἀδὰμ σὺν πλῶμα εἰς ἀσύγκλητον ἀνέστημα χειρὸς ἀνέστησεν, ἐν ὁμορφίᾳ σαρκὸς ἀμαρτίας ἀφάρτος, καὶ κατὰ κείνας τὴν ἀμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί. Ath. p. 620.

Εἰ ὅ μὴ ἐν τῇ ἀμαρτησίᾳ φύσις ἡ ἀναμάρτητος ἀφάρτος, πῶς κατεκρίθη ἡ ἀμαρτία ἐν τῇ σαρκί; Id. p. 368.

(1 Pet. 1. 19. Heb. 7. 26.)

John 14. 30.—ἐν ἡμοῖς δὲ ἔχει εἶδέναι.

John 19. 6.—ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐν αὐτῷ αἰτίαν.

Matt. 3. 17. 1 Tim. 3. 16.

Jer. 23. 6. 33. 16.

Psal. 85. 11. Shall Heaven and Earth retain Enmity, which have so kindly embraced, and kissed each other; since *Truth hath sprouted from the earth, and righteousness hath looked down from heaven*? Shall the War go on, when the great Mediatour and Umpire of Peace is come: *preaching peace to them that are afar off, and to them that are near*? Can Death any longer reign over us, or our Disgrace and Misery continue, now that *the Prince of life, the Lord of glory, the Captain of salvation* doth appear for our relief?

Now then what can be more worthy of Joy, than such a blessed Turn of Affairs? How can we otherwise than with exceeding Gladness solemnize such a Peace? A Peace accorded with him, who in forces so infinitely doth overmatch us; who at his Pleasure can utterly quell us; who with the greatest Ease, with less than a Word of his Mouth, can dash us to nothing, or hurl us down into an Abyss of remediless Woe: How can we avoid being extremely satisfied at the

Re-



Recovery of his Favour and Friendship, which alone can be the Foundation of our Safety and Welfare, which is the sole Fountain of all Good, of all Comfort, of all Felicity?

5. Our Lord's Nativity doth infer a great Honour, and a high Preferment to us: No wise indeed could Mankind be so dignified, or our Nature so advanced as hereby: No Wisdom can devise a Way beyond this, whereby God should honour his most special Favourites, or promote them to a nearness unto himself. For hence we become allied to God, in a most strait affinity, his eternal Son being made our Brother; hence as touching the Blood-royal of Heaven we do in Dignity o'er-top all the Creation; so that what the Psalmist uttered concerning Man, is verified in the most comprehensive Sense, *Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, and hast set him over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet*: For now the Son of Man, being also the Son of God, is the Head of all principality and power, is the Lord of all things, is the Sovereign Prince of all the World; is placed far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. That is a peculiar Honour, to which the highest Angels cannot pretend; for, he took not the nature of Angels, but he took the seed of Abraham; whence those noble Creatures are become in a manner inferior to poor us; and according to just Obligation, willingly to adore our Nature; for, when God brought his first begotten Son into the world, he said, *Let all the Angels of God worship him*: Is not indeed our Flesh become adorable, as the true Shechinah, as the everlasting Place of the supreme Majesty, wherein the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily; as the most holy Shrine of the Divinity; as the Orb of inaccessible light; as more than all this, if more could be expressed, or if we could expound that Text, *the word was made flesh, and dwelt in us*? May not our Soul worthily claim the highest respect, all whose Faculties (being endowed with unmeasurable Participations of the Holy Spirit) have been turned to a perfect Harmony with the All-wise Understanding, and the most pure Will of God? Yea, which hath been admitted into the nearest Consortship, into the strictest Union with the eternal Word; hath become an ingredient of him, who is the wisdom, and the power of God? It was a great Dignity that Man should be made according to the Image of God, but it is a more sublime Glory, that God should be made after the Image of Man, *κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ Θεοῦ, being made like to us in all things*, bating only Sin, which is no Part of us, but an unnatural excrescence, or a deflection from our Nature: How could we be so raised up to God as by his thus stooping down to us? What can be imagined more Honourable to us, than that God should deem us worthy of such Condescension? This, this indeed is our Exaltation, that God for us should express not only so vast Charity, but so prodigious Humility.

And is it not good Matter of Joy to be thus highly graced? When are Men better pleased, than when they are preferred; then especially, when from the meanest State, from the Dung-hil, or from the Dust, they are raised to be set among Princes, and made to inherit the Throne of Glory? Wherefore this being our Case, that we Sons of Earth, Children of Corruption, and Brethren of Worms (in Job's Stile) we Exiles of Paradise, we Heirs of Death and Misery; we, that by our Nature are the lowest of all intelligent Creatures, that by our Merits were debased beneath the Beasts that perish, that we are assumed to such Relations, that we are ennobled to such a Pitch, that our Nature hath mounted so high above all Creatures, with what Enlargement of Heart should we entertain a Dispensation so wonderful; how welcome should that Day be which doth introduce it?

6. Finally, if we survey all principal Causes of Joy, and special Exultation, we shall find them all concurring in this Event.

Is a Messenger of good News embraced with Joy? Behold the great Evangelist is come, with his Mouth full of News, most admirable, most acceptable: He, who doth acquaint us, that God is well pleased, that Man is restored, that the Adversary is cast down, that Paradise is set open, and Immortality retrieved; that Truth and Righteousness, Peace and Joy, Salvation and Happiness are descended, and come to dwell on Earth; He of whom the Prophet told, *How beautiful upon the Mountains,*

Eph. 3. 10, 17.

(Hymn. 6.)

πᾶσι καὶ

πνεύματι, ἡμῶν

ἡ καὶ σάρα.

Ath. p. 612.)

Psalm. 8. 5.

Heb. 2. 7.

Col. 2. 10.

Eph. 2. 22.

Act. 10. 36.

Eph. 1. 21.

Phil. 2. 9.

1 Pet. 3. 22.

Heb. 2. 17.

Heb. 1. 6.

Hymn. 612.

Ath. p. 597.

Col. 2. 9.

Totum corpus

implet tota di-

vinitas. Leo

de Nat. Ser. 10.

John 1. 14.

3. 34.

1 Cor. 1. 24.

Qui cum origini humane multum de-  
derit, quod nos ad imaginem suam fecit,  
reparationi nostre longe amplius tribuit,  
cum servili forma ipse se Dominum coop-  
tavit. Leo de Nat. Ser. 4.

Heb. 2. 17.

our Nature: How

Exultent ergo in laudem Dei corda  
credentium, & mirabilia ejus confitean-  
tur filii hominum, quoniam, in hoc pra-  
cipue Dei opere humilitas nostra cog-  
noscit, quanti eam suus conditor esti-  
mavit. Leo Ser. 4.

Psalm. 113. 7, 8.

1 Sam. 2. 8.

Job 17. 14.

Psalm. 39. 12.

Hic infirmitatis nostrae suspiciens  
conditionem, propter quos ad inferna  
descendit eosdem in caelestibus collocavit.  
Leo de Nat. 5.

Apoc. 12. 10.

John 14. 30.

Luke 10. 18.

Isa. 52. 7.



Nab. 1. 15. *tain; are the Feet of him that bringeth good Tidings; that publisheth Peace, that*  
 Rom. 10. 15. *bringeth glad Tidings of Good, that publisheth Salvation, that saith unto Sion, Thy*  
 Isa. 61. 1, 2. *God reigneth; He who doth himself thus declare the Drift and Purport of his*  
 Luke 4. 18. *Message; The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, to preach good Tidings unto the*  
*Meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted; to proclaim Liberty to the*  
*Captives, and opening of the Prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the accept-*  
*able Year of the Lord, to comfort all that mourn.*

Is the Birth of a Prince by honest Subjects to be commemorated with joyous  
 Festivity? Behold a PRINCE born to all the World! a Prince undertaking to rule  
 Mankind with sweetest Clemency, and exact Justice; a Prince bringing with him  
 all Peace and Prosperity; in whose Days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell  
 safely; who shall protect us in assured Rest and Safety; shall secure us from all  
 Danger and Mischief; shall achieve most gallant and glorious Exploits in our Be-  
 half; shall vanquish all the Enemies of our Welfare, shall rescue us from the worst  
 Slaveries and Mischiefs; shall settle us in a most free and happy State: He who  
 bringeth Salvation from our Enemies, and from the hands of all that hate us, that  
 being delivered from the hands of our Enemies, we might serve him without Fear,  
 in Holiness and Righteousness before him, all the Days of our Life. Now therefore  
 it is seasonable to cry out, Allelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, let us be  
 glad and rejoice, and give Honour to him.

May Victory worthily beget Exultation? See the invincible Warriour doth issue  
 forth into the Field conquering and to conquer: He that shall baffle and rattle the  
 strong one, our formidable Adversary; that shall rout all the Forces of Hell, and  
 triumph over the Powers of Darkness; that utterly shall defeat Sin, and slay Death  
 it self; and shall subdue the World, and lay all Things prostrate at his Feet; be-  
 hold the Captain of our Salvation; arrayed with glorious Humility, and armed  
 with a mighty Patience; See, the great Blow it struck, at which the infernal  
 Powers do stagger; the Devil's Pride and Envy are abased, all the Enemies are  
 amazed, are daunted, are confounded at his Presence; they cannot stand, they  
 break, they scatter, they flee before him.

Is a Proclamation of Peace, after rueful Wars, to be solemnized with Alacrity?  
 Behold then everlasting Peace between Heaven and Earth, a general Peace among  
 Men, a sound Peace between each good Man and himself are settled and published;  
 the illustrious Herald, the noble Hostage of them is arrived; the Prince of Peace  
 himself doth bring all Peace unto us.

Is Satisfaction of Desire, and Hope very pleasant? Behold the desire of all Na-  
 tions, the expectation of Israel, he for whom the whole Creation groaned, is come.

Is recovery of Liberty delectable to poor Slaves and Captives? Behold, the Re-  
 deemer is come out of Sion; the precious Ransom, sufficient to purchase the Free-  
 dom of many Worlds, is laid down; unblemished Innocence, Purity and Perfe-  
 ction appearing in human Nature, have procured a Release for us; have un-  
 locked the Prison of Sin detaining us, have knocked off the Shackles of Guilt sorely  
 pinching and galling our Consciences; have wrested us from the Hands of those

*Nam superbia hostis antiqui non im-  
 merito sibi in omnes homines jus tyran-  
 nicum vindicabat nec indebito dominatu  
 premebat, quos a mandato Dei sponta-  
 neos in obsequium suae voluntatis allexe-  
 rat. Leo de Nativ. Serm. 2.*

Luke 4. 18. Isa. 35. 10.

proud Masters, who claimed a Right, who exercised a most  
 tyrannous Power over us; He is come, that proclaimeth Li-  
 berty to the Captives, and opening of the Prison to them that  
 are bound; The Time is come of which the Prophet fore-  
 told — The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to  
 Sion with Songs, and everlasting Joy upon their Heads; they  
 shall obtain joy and gladness; and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Is an Overture of Health acceptable to sick and languishing Persons? Behold  
 the great Physician, endued with admirable Skill, and furnished with infallible  
 Remedies, is come, to cure us of our Maladies, and ease us of our Pains; to bind  
 up our Wounds, and to pour in Balm (the most sovereign Balm of his own Blood)  
 into them; to free us, not only from all mortiferous Diseases, but from Mortality  
 it self: He, who was sent to bind up and heal the broken-hearted; He, who  
 himself took our Infirmities, and bare our Sicknesses; He, of whom the Prophet (in  
 relation to corporal, and much more to spiritual Infirmities) did foretel; —  
 God will come and save you; then the Eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the  
 Ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame Man leap as a Hart, and the  
 Tongue



*Tongue of the dumb shall sing* ; He whose Art no Disease can resist, who is able to cure our most desperate, our most inveterate Distempers ; to heal the Corruption and Impotency of our Nature, to avoid the Ignorances and Errors of our Understanding, to correct the Stupidity of our Hearts, the Perverseness of our Wills, the Disorder of our Affections ; to mitigate our Anguish of Conscience, and cleanse our Sores of Guilt ; by various efficacious Medicines, by the wholesome Instructions of his Doctrine, by the powerful Inspirations of his Grace, by the refreshing Comforts of his Spirit, by the salutary Virtue of his Merits and Sufferings.

Is Mirth seasonable on the Day of Marriage ? Behold the greatest Wedding that ever was, is this Day solemnized : Heaven and Earth are contracted ; Divinity is espoused to Humanity ; a sacred, an indissoluble Knot is tied between God and Man. *The Bridegroom is come forth out of his Chamber* (*Verbum Dei de utero Virginali*) clad in his nuptial Garment of Flesh, and ready to wed the Church his beloved Spouse ; *Let us therefore be glad and rejoice ; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made her self ready.*

*In natali Domini quasi in nuptiis spiritualibus sponsa sua Ecclesia Christus adjunctus est—tunc processit sponsus de thalamo suo, hoc est, verbum Dei de utero virginali.* Aug. de temp. Serm. 2.  
*Ἡ παρὰ τοῦ ἁγίου ἁδὲν ἐκπορεύεται τὴν οὐρανὴν.* Procl. in Eph. p. 1.  
Joel 2. 16.

Is the Access of a good Friend to be received with cheerful Gratulation ? Behold the dearest and best Friend of all Mankind (most able, most willing, most ready to perform all good Offices ; to impart wholesome Advice, needful Aid, sweet Converse, and seasonable Consolation) is arrived to visit us, to sojourn with us, to dwell with us for ever.

Is opportune Relief grateful to Persons in a forlorn Condition, pinched with extreme Want, or plunged in any hard Distress ? Behold, a merciful, a bountiful, a mighty Saviour and Succourer, undertaking to comfort all that mourn ; inviting all such to receive from him a plentiful Supply for their Needs, a comfortable Ease in their Pressures, a happy Riddance from their Calamities ; who crieth aloud, *If any one thirsteth, let him come to me and drink ; Come to me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

Is the Sun-rising comfortable, after a tedious, darksome and cold Night ? See, the Sun of righteousness is risen with healing in his Wings, dispensing all about his pleasant Rays, and kindly Influences : *The Day spring from on high hath visited us ;* diffusing an universal Light upon the Souls of Men, whereby the Night of Ignorance is dispelled, the Spectres of Error are vanished, the Mists of Doubt are scattered ; whereby we clearly and assuredly discern all Truths of Importance to us, and worthy of our Knowledge ; concerning the Nature and Attributes, the Works and Providence, the Will and Pleasure of God ; concerning our Selves, our Natural and Original, our Duty and Interest, our future State, and final Doom : *Our Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon us ; the Light of the World, the true Light, enlightning every Man ; by whose Lustre all Flesh may see the Salvation of God, and which guideth our Feet in the way of Peace, doth visibly shine forth upon us.*

Never indeed did Heaven with so fair and serene a Countenance smile upon Earth, as then it did, when (this *αἶθρ λαμπρὸς ἢ ὀρθρινός,*) *bright and Morning-star* did spring above our Horizon, bringing this goodly Day ; and with it shedding Life and Cheer among us.

From this auspicious Day, did commence the Revocation of that fatal Curse, by which we were expelled from Paradise, adjudged to Death, and committed to Hell ; from thence we became re-instated in a Condition of Hope, and in a fair Capacity of Happiness ; from thence is to be dated a return of Joy into this Region of Disconsolateness. In this Nativity Mankind was born, or did revive from manifold Deaths ; from a Legal, a Moral, a Natural, an eternal Death ; from lying dead in irreparable Guilt, and under an insuperable Power of Sin ; from having our Bodies irrecoverably dissolved by Corruption, and our Souls immersed into that second more ghastly Death of perpetual incurable Anguish.

It is in effect therefore the Birth-day of the World ; the beginning of a new, better, eternal Life to Men (offered to all, and effectually bestowed on those who will embrace it) which we now do celebrate : All Reason therefore we have to rejoice most heartily, and most abundantly ; As the Goods thence accruing to us are in Multitude innumerable, in Quality

It is the Birth-day of the CHURCH.  
*Generatio enim Christi origo est populi Christiani, & natalis capitis natalis est corporis.* P. Leo de Nat. Serm. 6.  
*Sicut cum Christo in passione crucifixi, in resurrectione resuscitati, in ascensione ad dextram Patris collocati, ita cum ipso sumus in hac nativitate congeniti.* Ibid.  
inefti-



ineffimable, in Duration immense; so in some Correspondence should our Joy be very intense, very effuse, very stable; The Contemplation of them should infuse somewhat of that unspeakable Joy, whereof St. Peter speaketh; we should be filled (according to St. Paul's Expression) with all Joy and Peace in believing them; we should hold fast (as the Apostle to the Hebrews adviseth) the Confidence and rejoicing of Hope, grounded on them, firm to the End.

Having so many, so great Causes of Joy, are we not very stupid, are we not strangely cross and perverse if we neglect so pleasant a Duty?

To conclude: Of all the Days that rise upon us, this undoubtedly is the Queen, crowned by God's own Hand with sovereign Blessings; GOD hath avowed it to be the Day of his peculiar Making, and therefore of our special Rejoicing; for thus of old the inspired Psalmist did teach and exhort us to keep Christmas, This is the Day, which the Lord hath made, let us rejoice and be glad therein.

## SERMON XLIV.

### The Sufferings of CHRIST foretold in the Old Testament.

#### ACTS III. 18.

*But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his Prophets, that Christ should suffer, be hath so fulfilled.*

MANY good Arguments there are, different in kind, which conspire to persuade the Truth of our Religion; such as are the intrinick Reasonableness, Excellency and Perfection of its Doctrine; the miraculous Works performed in Attestation thereto; the special Favour of Providence declared in the Support and Propagation thereof; but upon no other ground do the Scriptures so much build its Truth, and our Obligation to embrace it, as upon the exact Correspondence and Conformity thereof to all the ancient Scriptures, which did foreshew or foretell its Revelation and Introduction into the World; to those especially which described the personal Characters, Circumstances and Performances of our Lord: To this our Lord in his Discourses and Disputes with incredulous People, referred them; Search the Scriptures (said he) because in them ye expect to have eternal life (that is, to find the true Way of saving Truth leading thereto) and those are they which testify of me; by this he instructed and convicted his Disciples; beginning from Moses and from all the Prophets he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself: and, These (said he to them presently before his Departure) are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me: This the Apostles in all their Preaching (whereby they taught, proved and persuaded, the Christian Doctrine) did chiefly insist upon; Moses (saith St. Peter) truly said unto the Fathers, yea, and all the Prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days; and, To him (saith he again) give all the Prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. And, of St. Paul 'tis said, that he mightily convinced the Jews-----shewing by the Scriptures, that Jesus was the



the Christ; and ---- he expounded, and testified the Kingdom of God, persuading them Acts 18. 28.  
 concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the Prophets; thus the chief 28. 23.  
 Apostles and Founders of our Religion in their publick Discourses; and in their  
 Epistles, they observe the same Method; as particularly asserting Christian  
 Doctrines and Duties by the Testimonies of Prophetical Scriptures, so generally  
 affirming our Religion to be chiefly grounded on them; of which Salvation (saith  
 St. Peter, concerning the Salvation exhibited by the Gospel) the Prophets did inquire, 1 Pet. 1. 10.  
 and search diligently, who prophesied of the grace to come unto you; and (in regard to  
 the Conviction of others) he seems to prefer the Attestation of this kind before  
 the spiritual Revelation immediately made to the Apostles; for having spoken of  
 it, he subjoins, *ἡμεῖς ἔχομεν βεβαιώμενον & προσημασμένον λόγον* We have also a more sure 2 Pet. 1. 19.  
 word of Prophecy, whereunto ye do well, that ye do take heed, as unto a light that shineth  
 in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts. And, St.  
 Paul saith, that the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, was then made Rom. 16. 26.  
 manifest, and by the prophetical scriptures, according to the commandment of the ever-26. 1. 2.  
 lasting God, made known to all nations, to the obedience of faith; and, The Holy Wri-  
 tings (he telleth Timothy) were able to make him wise to the salvation, which is, by 1 Tim. 3. 15.  
 the faith of Jesus Christ; that is, they were able to shew, and persuade to him the  
 Truth of Christianity, which promisseth Salvation to all that heartily embrace it,  
 and observe its Laws.

Such a Stress was laid upon this Probation by the Founders of our Religion; and  
 no wonder; for that is not only extremely forcible in it self, but hath some parti-  
 cular Uses, and some peculiar Advantages beyond others. The Fore-knowledge  
 of future contingent Events (such as were many of those concerning our Saviour,  
 depending upon the freest Acts of human Will) as it is for the manner of attaining  
 it most incomprehensible to us, so it is most proper to God, and by all Men so  
 acknowledged; future contingencies being secrets, which no Man, no Angel,  
 no Creature can dive into, they being not discernible in their Causes, which are  
 indeterminate; nor in themselves, who are finite. The Prediction therefore of  
 such Events could not otherwise than proceed from his Pleasure; neither could he  
 yield it in any way of Favour and Approbation to that, which was not perfectly  
 true and Good: This Way therefore doth absolutely confirm the Truth and  
 Goodness of Christian Doctrine; it withal manifests the great Worth and  
 Weight thereof, as implying the particular Regard and Care God had of it, de-  
 signing it so anciently, laying Trains of Providence toward it, and preparing such  
 Evidences for the Confirmation thereof; it together into the Bargain maintaineth  
 the Truth of the Jewish Dispensation, the Sincerity of the ancient Patriarchs and  
 Prophets, and the vigilant Care the divine Goodness hath always had over the  
 State of Religion, and toward the Welfare of Mankind; never leaving it desti-  
 tute of some immediate Revelations from himself. It had a peculiar Aptitude to  
 convert the Jews, who were possessed with a full Persuasion concerning the Veracity  
 and Sanctity of their ancient Prophets; and could not therefore doubt concerning  
 the Truth of that, which appeared conformable to that which they had foretold  
 should be declared, and dispensed for their Benefit. This Probation also hath this  
 Advantage, that it singly taken doth suffice to convince; whereas others can  
 hardly do it otherwise than in conjunction with one another, and especially with  
 its aid: For the Goodness of the Doctrine may be contested in some Points, and  
 however good it seem, it may be imputed to human Invention: Strange Effects  
 may be deemed producible by other Causes beside divine Power; and they may be  
 suffered to be done for other Ends than for Confirmation of Truth; they are also  
 commonly transient, and thence most liable to doubt: Providence also is in many  
 Cases so mysterious, and unsearchable, that the incredulous will never allow any  
 Inferences to be drawn from it: But the plain Correspondence of Events to the  
 standing Records of ancient Prophecies (obvious, and conspicuous to every one  
 that will consult and compare them) concerning a Person to be sent by God, who  
 should have such Circumstances, and be so Qualified; who should in God's Name  
 preach such Doctrines, and perform such Works, is a Proof which alone may  
 assure any Man, that such a Person doth come from God, and is in what he de-  
 clareth or doth approve by him: No Counterfeiting here can find Place; no  
 Evasion can be devised from the Force of this Proof.

This



This way therefore of Discourse our Lord and his Apostles (whose Business it was by the most proper and effectual Methods to subdue the Reasons of Men to the obedience of faith, and entertainment of Christian Truth) did especially use; as generally in respect to all things concerning our Lord, so particularly in regard to his Passion; declaring it to happen punctually according to what had been foreseen by God, and thence foreshewed by his Prophets, rightly understood; *He took the twelve* (saith St. Luke of our Lord) *and said unto them; behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the Prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished; for he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on; and they shall scourge him, and put him to death. And again, after his Resurrection, he thus reproves his Disciples; O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken; ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?* They did not then (partly being blinded with Prejudice, partly not having used due Industry, and perhaps not excelling in natural Capacity, however not yet being sufficiently enlightened by divine Grace) apprehend, or discern, that according to the prophetical Instructions our Lord was to suffer; but afterward, when he had opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, they did see, and specially urge this Point: Then St. Peter declared, that the Spirit of Christ, which was in the Prophets did testify beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow; then it was their manner to reason (as is said of St. Paul) out of the Scriptures, opening, and alledging, that Christ must needs have suffered; saying none other things, than those, which the Prophets and Moses did say should come, that Christ should suffer; delivering first of all, that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures: This is that which in my Text St. Peter doth insist upon, affirming about the Passion of Christ, that it not only had been predicted by one, or more, but foreshewed by an universal Consent of all the Prophets; to illustrate and confirm which Assertion of his, is the Scope of our present Discourse: to perform which, after having briefly touched the State of the Matter in hand, we shall apply our selves.

That the *Messias* was to come in an humble and homely Manner (without Appearance of worldly Splendour, or Grandeur) that he was to converse among Men in a State of external Poverty, and Meanness; that he was to cause Offences, and find Oppositions in his Proceedings; that he was to be repulsed and rejected, to be hated and scorned, to be disgracefully and harshly treated, to be grievously persecuted and afflicted; yea that at last he was to be prosecuted, condemned and executed as a Malefactor, is a Truth indeed, which the Jews (although they firmly believed, and earnestly expected the coming of a *Messias*) did not, and indeed were hardly capable to entertain. It was a Point repugnant to the whole Frame of their Conceits; yea, inconsistent with the Nature and Drift of their Religion, as they did understand it; for their Religion in its Surface (deeper than which their gross Fancy could not penetrate) did represent earthly Wealth, Dignity and Prosperity, as things most highly valuable; did propound them as very proper, if not as the sole Rewards of Piety and Obedience; did imply consequently the Possession of them to be certain Arguments of the divine Good-will, and Regard: They could not therefore but esteem Poverty, Affliction and Disgrace as Curses from Heaven, and plain Indications of God's Disfavour toward those on whom they fell: They particularly are said to have conceited, that to be rich was a needful Qualification for a Prophet (no less needful, than to be of a good Complexion; of a good Capacity, of a good Conversation and Life) *Spiritus Dei non requiescit super pauperem*, The Spirit of God doth not rest upon a poor Man; (that is, no special Communications of Grace, or of Wisdom and Goodness, are by God ever afforded to Persons of a low and afflicted Condition) being a *Maxim* which they had framed, and which currently passed among them: That he therefore, who was designed to be so notable a Prophet; who was to have the Honour of being so special an Instrument of promoting God's Service and Glory; who therefore should be so highly favoured by God, that he should appear despicable, and undergo great Afflictions, was a Notion that could not but seem very absurd; that could not otherwise than be very abominable to them. They had farther (in congruity to these Prejudices, abated by that extreme self-love, and self-flattery, which were peculiar to that Nation) raised in themselves a strong Opinion, that the *Messias* was to come in a great visible State and Power; to achieve Deeds of mighty Prowess



Prowess and Renown; to bring the Nations of the World into Subjection under him; and so to reign among them in huge Majesty and Prosperity; when *Jesus* therefore (however otherwise answerable in his Circumstances, Qualifications and Performances, to the prophetic Characters of the *Messias*) did first appear such as he did, with some Pretences, or Intimations rather, that he was the *Messias*, their Stomach presently rose at it; they were exceedingly scandalized at him; they deemed him not only a *Mad-man* (one possessed or distracted) and an *Impostour*, but a *Blasphemer*; for no less than Blasphemy they took it to be for so mean and pitiful a Wretch (as to their Eyes he seemed) to assume unto himself so high a Dignity, and so near a Relation unto God, as being the *Messias* did import: We even see the Disciples themselves of our Lord so deeply imbued with this national Prejudice, that, even after they had avowed him for the *Christ*, they could scarce with Patience hear him foretelling what grievous things should befall him: St. Peter himself, upon that Occasion, even just after he seriously confessed him to be the *Christ*, did, as it is expressed, *take him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord*: Yea, presently after that our Lord most plainly had described his sufferings to them, they could not forbear dreaming of a Kingdom, and of being *Grandees* therein; yea farther, even after our Lord's Passion and Resurrection, this Fancy still possessed them; for even then they demanded of him, whether he would *at that time restore the Kingdom unto Israel*; meaning such an external visible Kingdom.

Hence of all things, notifying the *Messias*, this seemeth to be the only Particular, which in general the *Jews* did not, or would not see, and acknowledge; and this caused them to oversee all other glorious Marks, how clearly soever shining in, and about the Person of *Jesus*: This Cloud hindered them from discerning the Excellency of his Doctrine, from regarding the Sanctity of his Life, from being duly affected with the Wonderfulness of his Works; from minding, or from crediting all the Testimonies from Heaven ministred unto him; this, as St. Paul telleth us, was the main Scandal which obstructed their embracing the Gospel. As it was their Ignorance or Errour in this Point, which disposed them to persecute our Lord (*nisi enim ignoratus nihil pati posset*, as *Tertullian* saith; *if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory*, saith St. Paul) so it was that, which maintained their obstinate Hatred of his Name and Memory; although graced with so illustrious Testimonies of divine Power and Providence.

We cannot therefore here, as in other particulars concerning our Lord, alledge the general Consent of God's People in expounding the Prophets according to our Sense, this being one of those Points, in respect to which the Prophets themselves did foresee, and foretel their perverse Stupidity, and Incredulity; that *they should look, and not see; hear, and not understand*; yielding herein special Occasion to that Complaint, *Who hath believed our report?* Yet notwithstanding their affected and culpable blindness, there is no particular concerning the *Messias* in the ancient Scriptures, either more frequently in way of mystical Insinuation and Adumbration, glanced at, or more clearly, in direct and plain Language expressed; or which also by reasonable deduction thence may be more strongly inferred than this.

1. I say, *First*, It is frequently glanced at by mystical Insinuations; for explaining the intent of which Assertion, we shall premise somewhat, which may serve to declare the Pertinency of many Citations produced out of the *ancient Scripture* in the *New Testament*; the which, together with others connected with them, or bearing just Analogy to them, we also, being assured of their Design by the Authority of our Lord and his *Apostles*, may safely presume after them to apply to the same Purposes.

We may then consider, that the All-wise God, (who *worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, and to whom all things are present*) having before eternal times (as St. Paul speaketh) determined in due time to send the *Messias*, for accomplishing the greatest Design that ever was to be managed in this World (that which should bring the highest Glory to himself, and procure the richest Benefits to the Principal of his Creatures here) did by his incomprehensible Providence so order things, that all the special Dispensations preceding it should have a fit Tendency, and an advantageous Reference thereto; so that, when it came upon the Stage, it might appear that the Main of the Plot consisted therein; and that whatever was acted before, had principally a Respect thereto: As therefore from the Beginning of



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Jer. 30. 9. Hof. 3. 5. Ezek. 34.  
23, 24. 37. 24, 25.

(Heb. 5. 8.  
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say of them all, as the Apostle to the Hebrews did of the Jewish Priests, they served to the subindication, and shewing of heavenly Things. In David particularly this Relation is so plain, that because thereof, in the Prophets *Jeremy*, *Ezekiel* and *Hosea*, the *Messias* is called by his Name; as if he were revived in the *Messias*. It indeed well suited the Dignity of this great Personage, and the Importance of his Business, that he should have appointed so notable Heralds and Harbingers to go before his Face; furnished with conspicuous Ensigns and Badges denoting their Relation to him. It was proper, that God should appear to have had always an express Regard toward him: It consequently doth serve to our Edification; for that we duly comparing Things, and espying this admirable Correspondency, may be instructed thereby, and established in our Faith; may be excited to the admiration of God's Wisdom, so harmoniously connecting Things, and of his Goodness, so provident for our Welfare; may also be induced thereby the more highly to adore the *Messias*, and to esteem his Design: Such Uses St. Paul signifieth, when having compared divers Things concerning Moses to Things concerning *Christ*, he saith; All these Things happened as Types, and they were written for our Admonition, on whom the ends of the World are come.

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Psal. 105. 15.  
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Heb. 8. 6.  
Gal. 3. 19.  
Nah. 9. 27.  
Acts 7. 45.

Euseb. Hist.  
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Heb. 8. 5.  
Exod. 25. 40.  
Rom. 5. 14.  
Vid. Euseb. ib.

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in a more open manner, should be represented, contained in those Words of Tertullian: The Sacrament indeed (saith he) of Christ's Passion ought to have been figured in the (ancient) predication; for as much as that the more incredible it was (if it should have been preached nakedly) the more offensive it would have been; and the more magnificent it was, the more it was to be overshadowed, that the difficulty of understanding it might be cause of

*seeking of God's Grace.* Supposing it also that it should be, it is plain that the Passages about *Abel, Isaac, Josias, Jeremy,* and the like, may congruously be applied thereto; that the elevation of the *Brazen Serpent,* and the slaying the *Paschal Lamb* may appositely represent it; the *Jewish Priests,* with all their Sacrifices, may also with Reason be brought in, and accommodated thereto: These Things indeed by themselves solitarily are not apt peremptorily to evince, that it should be; yet do they handsomely suit it, and adorn the Supposition thereof; according to the Notion premised about the figurative relation between the Matters of the *Old World* before the *Messias,* and the *New* one after him. But with a clearer Evidence, and stronger Force we may affirm, that the *Messias* his Sufferings were implied in the Afflictions, ascribed to his Representative King *David,* such as he in several *Psalms* (in the 35, 69, 109, 118, and especially in the 22 *Psalms*) describeth them; wherein divers Passages, expressing the extreme Sadness; and Forlornness of his Condition, occur, which by the History of his Life do not so well according to the literal signification of Words, appear congruous to his Person; which therefore there is a Necessity, or at least much Reason that they should be applied to the *Messias,* whom that *Holy King* did represent.

Which being admitted, comparing the Passages we find there to that which be-  
 fel *Jesue*, we may observe an admirable Harmony; there being scarce any Part of  
 his Affliction in his Life, or at any Circumstance thereof at his Death, which is  
 not in exprefs and emphatical Terms there set out: There we have expreffed his

Pfal. 22. 9. low, and despicable State (*I am a worm, and no man; the reproach of men, and despised of the people*) the causeless Hatred and Enmity of the Populacy, and of the

**Pfal.69.4. 35.** great Ones toward him *(They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my Head; they that would destroy me, being mine Enemies wrongfully, are mighty; they compassed me about with Words of Hatred, and fought against me without a Cause)*  
**7.109.3.** the ingrateful Requital for all the Good intended, and performed by him: *(They*

Psalm 35: 12. rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love) their rejecting him (The Stone which  
109. 5. the Builders refused is become the Head-Stone in the Corner.) Their insidious, and ca-

luminous Proceeding against him (without cause have they bid for me their Net, in  
a Pit, which without Cause they have digged for my Soul. And, False Wit-

nesses did rise up ; they laid to my Charge Things that I knew not ; and, The mouth of the wicked, and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me ; they have spoken against me with a lying Tongue.) Their bitter insulting over him

Psal. 35. 15. in his Affliction ; (But in mine Adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves  
69. 26. together : yea the Chiefs gathered themselves together against me.) The

persecute him, whom thou hast smitten, and they talk to the Grief of those, whom thou hast wounded:  $\kappa\iota\ \epsilon\sigma\tau\iota\ \tau\omicron\ \alpha\lambda\gamma\epsilon\iota\ \tau\omicron\ \tau\epsilon\pi\omega\mu\acute{\alpha}\tau\omega\upsilon\ \mu\epsilon\ \tau\epsilon\pi\omega\sigma\iota\sigma\tau\alpha\iota.$  and

to the smart of my wounds they have added; (say the LXX.) Their scornful reviling, flouting, and mocking him: (41) they that see me, blush with shame.

35. 22. 16. *they shoot the Lip, they shake the Head; saying, He trusted in the Lord, that he*

22. 6. 7. should deliver him, let him deliver him, seeing he delighteth in him. And, I became a reproach unto them; when they looked upon me, they shook their Heads; they

opened their Mouth wide against me, and said, Aha, aha, our Eye hath seen it.  
Ἐτίεξαν με, ἔξιμυκτηίεσαν μυκτηρισμὸν, ἔβρουσαν ἐπ' ἐμὲ τὸς ὀδόντας αὐτῶν they  
tempted me, they extremely mocked me, they gnashed their Teeth upon me.) Their

**Psal. 22: 16.** cruel and contemptuous Usage of him; (Dogs have compassed me; the Assembly

all my Bones; they look and stare upon me.) Their abusive Dealing with him,

**Pfal. 69. 21.** when he in his Distress called for some refreshment, (*They gave me Gall for my Meat, and in my Thirst they gave me Vinegar to drink.*) Their disposal of his Gar-

Pfal. 22. 18. ments upon his Suffering (*They part my Garments among them, and cast Lots upon my Vesture.*) His being deserted of his Friends and Followers: and thence de-

Pfal. 69. 9. 20. *stitute of all Consolation ; (I am become a Stranger to my Brethren, and an alien unto*

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my Mother's Children; — I am full of heaviness, and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for Comforters, but I found none.) The Sense of God's withholding his Favour, and Help; (My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me?) His charitable Disposition and De-meanour toward his Enemies and Persecutors; (But as for me, when they were sick (when they did trouble me, say the LXX.) my cloathing was Sackcloth, I humbled my self with fasting, and my Prayer returned into my own Bosom; I behaved my self as though it had been my Friend, or Brother, I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his Mother.) Which Passages, and the like, how patly, and punctually they do square to respective Passages in the Gospels, I need not to shew; we do, I presume, all of us well enough remember that both most doleful and comfortable History, to be able our selves to make the Application.

But there farther are not only such oblique Intimations, or Significations of this Matter, shrowded under the Coverture of other Persons, and Names; but very direct, and immediate Predictions concerning the *Messias* his being to suffer, most clearly expressed: That whole Famous Chapter (the 53d) of *Isay*, doth most evidently and fully declare it, wherein the kind, manner, causes, ends, and consequences of his Sufferings, together with his Behaviour under them, are graphically represented: His appearing Meanness (He hath no form, or comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty, that we should desire him: (the disgrace, contempt, repulses, and rejection he underwent (He is despised and rejected of men—we hid our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not,) His afflicted State (He is a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted,) the bitter and painful manner of his Affliction (He was stricken; he bare stripes; he was wounded and bruised) his being accused, adjudged and condemned as a Malefactor (He was taken from prison, and from judgment—he was numbred among the transgressours) his Death consequent (He poured out his soul unto death; he was cut out of the Land of the living) the design and end of his Sufferings; they were appointed, and inflicted by divine Providence for our sake, and in our stead; for the Expiation of our Sins; and our Salvation. (It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief—when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin—he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities—the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed—surely he hath born our griefs, and carried our sorrows—for the transgression of my people he was smitten—the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all) his sustaining all this with a willing, quiet, humble Patience, and perfect Meekness (He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth) his charitable Praying for his Persecutors, and designing their Welfare (He made intercession for the Transgressours) the blessed Consequences, and happy Success of his Sufferings, in the Conversion, and Justification of Men; in performing God's Will and Work; in being satisfied, rewarded, and exalted himself (He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand; he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many;—I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong) which Passages as they do most exactly suit unto *Jesus*, and might in a sort constitute a true historical Narration of what he did endure; together with the Doctrines delivered in the Gospel concerning the Intents, and Effects of his Sufferings; so that they did according to the Intention of the divine Spirit, relate to the *Messias*, may from several considerations be made apparent; the context, and coherence of all this Passage with the Matters precedent and subsequent, the which plainly do respect the *Messias*, and his times, do argue it: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him, that bringeth good tidings? and, Behold my servant shall deal prudently, &c. are passages immediately going before; to which this Chapter is knit in way of continuation; and immediately after it doth follow: Sing, O barren, thou, that didst not bear, &c. being a no less perspicuous, than elegant Description of the Church, enlarged by accession of the *Gentiles*, which was to be brought to pass by the *Messias*. The general Scope of this whole Prophecy enforceth the same Conclusion; and the Incongruity of this particular Prediction to any other Person imaginable beside the *Messias* doth farther evince it; so high are the things ascribed to the suffering Person;



son; as that he should bear the sins of all God's people, and heal them; that he should by his knowledge justify many (or the Multitude) that the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand to these grand Purposes; that God would divide him a portion with the great, and that he should divide the spoil with the strong; the magnificency and importance of which sayings (rightly understood and weighed) do well agree to the *Messias*, but not to any other Person, or simple Man: Whence if the ancient *Jews* had reason to believe a *Messias* was to come (as they with general consent did suppose they had) they had as much Reason to apply this Place, as any other, to him, and thence to acknowledge that he was designed to be an eminent Sufferer. And indeed divers of the ancient *Targumists*, and most learned *Rabbins* did expound this Place of the one *Messias*, which was to come; as the *Purio fidei*, and other learned *Writers* do by several express Testimonies declare. This Place also discovereth the Vanity of that Figment, devised by some later *Jews*; who to evade it, and to oppose *Jesus*, have affirmed there was to be a double *Messias*; one, who should be much afflicted; another, who should greatly prosper; since we may observe, that here both great Afflictions and glorious Performances concurrently are ascribed to the same Person.

The same things are by Parts also clearly foretold in other Places of this Prophet, and in other prophetic Scriptures: By *Esay* again in the Chapter immediately preceding, Behold (saith God there) my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted, and exalted, and be very high; there is God's Servant (he, who in way of Excellency is such, that is, in the Style of this Prophet, the *Messias*) in his real glorious Capacity; it followeth concerning his external Appearance; His visage was so marred more than any mans, and his form more than the sons of men: And again, in the 49th Chapter; Thus saith the Lord, the redeemer of Israel, and his Holy one; to him, whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see, and arise, Princes also shall worship: What can be more express and clear, than that it is signified here, that the *Messias*, who should subject the World, with its Sovereign Powers, to the Acknowledgment and Veneration of himself, was to be despised by Men, to be detested by the Jewish People, to appear in a servile, and base Condition? The same Prophet doth again in the 50th Chapter, bring him in speaking thus: I give my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame, and spitting: His offending the Jews, so as thereby to aggravate their Sins, and accelerate their Punishments, is also thus expressed by the same Prophet: And he shall be for a sanctuary: But for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin, and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

The Prophet *Zachary* doth also in several Places very roundly express his Sufferings; his low Condition in those Words; Behold thy King cometh unto thee lowly, and riding upon an Ass; (that is, pauper, mean and sorry to appearance.) His manner of Death in those Words: Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and again; I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace, and of supplications, and they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn, &c. The Prophet *Daniel* also in that Place, from which probably the name *Messias* was taken, and which most expressly mentioneth him, saith, that after sixty two weeks the *Messias* shall be cut off, but not for himself—Now from all these Passages of Scripture (beside divers others to the same Purpose, observable by those, whose Industry is assisted by divine Illumination) we may well conclude with our Lord, *Ὁν ἡμεῖς ᾔπαυσαμεν, καὶ ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν* (according to the Prophets fore-shewing) it was to happen, that Christ should suffer; suffer in a life of penury, and disgrace, in a death of sorrow and shame.

That it was to fall out thus, might also be well inferred, by Reasons grounded upon the Qualities of the *Messias* his Person, and upon the Nature of his Performances, such as they are described in prophetic Scripture: He was to be really, and plainly to appear a Person of most admirable Vertue and Goodness; but never (as even Pagan Philosophers have observed) was, or can there be any such without undergoing the Trial of great Affliction. He was to be an Universal Pattern to Men of all sorts (especially to the greatest Part of Men, that is, to the poor and afflicted) of all righteousness; to exemplify particularly the most difficult Pieces of Duty;

Plato, Seneca,  
&c.



Duty; (*Humility, Patience, Meekness, Charity, Self-denial, entire Resignation* to God's Will) this he should not have had Opportunity, or Advantage of doing, should he have been high, wealthy, splendid, and prosperous in secular Matters, he was to exercise great Pity, and Sympathy toward all Mankind; toward the doing which it was requisite that he should himself taste and feel the Inconveniences, Troubles, Pains and Sorrows incident to us. He was to advance the repute of spiritual Goods, and eternal Blessings, depressing the Value of those Corporal and Temporal Things, which Men do so fondly admire, and dote on: The most commendous, and effectual way of doing which, was by an exemplary neglect, or rejection of worldly Glories, and Enjoyments; refusing the Honours, Profits and Pleasures here, adjoined to a high State. He was by the most kindly, gentle and peaceable Means to erect a Spiritual Kingdom; by pure force of Reason to subdue the Hearts and Consciences of Men to the Love, and Obedience of God; by wise Instruction, to raise in us the Hopes of future Récompences in Heaven; to the accomplishment of which Purposes Temporal Glory (working on the carnal Apprehensions and Affections of Men) had rather been prejudicial, than conducive. He was to accomplish and manage his great Designs by Means Supernatural, and Divine, the which would surely become more conspicuous by the visible Meanness, and Impotency of his State. He was also most highly to merit from God, for himself, and for us (to merit God's high Approbation of what he did, God's Favour and Grace to us) this he could not perform so well, as by willingly enduring for God's sake, and in our Behalf, the most hard and grievous things. He was in fine designed perfectly to save us; and consequently to appease God's Wrath, to satisfy divine Justice, to expiate our Sins; whereunto it was requisite, that he should undergo what he had deserved, being punished and afflicted for us.

*Vide Theodoti Orat. in Eph. 1. Com. cil. p. 997.*

Now that *Jesus* our Lord, did most thoroughly correspond to whatever is in this kind declared by the *Prophets* concerning the *Messias*, we need not by minutely relating the known History of his Life and Death make out any farther, since the whole Matter is palpably notorious, and no Adversary can deny it; I shall therefore conclude, that it is a clear and certain Truth, which *St. Peter* in our Text affirmeth, That, *Those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his Prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.*

Now, *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood, and hath made us Kings, and Priests unto God, and his Father; to Him be Glory, and Dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

*Blessing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power be unto him, that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. AMEN.*

## SERMON XLV.

### A Whit-Sunday SERMON of the Gift of the HOLY GHOST.

ACTS II. 38.

— And ye shall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost.

**A**MONG the divers reasonable Grounds and Ends of the observing *Festival Solemnities* (such as are comforting the Poor by hospitable Relief, refreshing the weary Labourer by Cessation from ordinary Toil, maintaining Good-will among Neighbours, by chearful and free Conversation, quick-  
ning



ning our Spirits and raising our Fancies by extraordinary Representations and Divertissements, infusing and preserving good Humour in People; such as are also the Decent conspiring in publick Expressions of special Reverence to God, withdrawing our Minds from secular Cares, and engaging them to (spiritual Meditations) the two principal Designs of them seem to be these.

2. The engaging us reasonably to practise that great Duty of thankfully remembering and praising God for those eminent Mercies, and Favours, which by his great Grace and Goodness have been vouchsafed to us.

Aug. de Civ.  
Dei, 10. 4.

Deut. 16.

Exod. 19. 1.

# The



The Benefit therefore and Blessing, which at this Time we are bound especially to consider and commemorate, is in effect the Publication and Establishment of the Covenant Evangelical, the Foundation of all our Hopes, and all our Claims to Happiness; but more immediately and directly the Donation of the Holy Spirit to the Christian Church, and to all its Members; for the better understanding, and more truly valuing of which most excellent Benefit, let us briefly declare the Nature, and Design thereof.

Almighty God, seeing the Generality of Mankind alienated from himself by gross Ignorance of its Duty toward him, and by habitual Inclinations to violate his holy Laws (originally implanted by him in our Nature, or anciently revealed to our first Parents) immersed in Error, enslaved to Vice, and obnoxious to the woful Consequences of them, severe Punishment, and extreme Misery; was pleased in his immense Goodness and Pity to design its rescue from that sad Condition; and in pursuance of that gracious Design did resolve upon Expedients the most admirable, and most efficacious that could be: For to redeem Men from the Tyranny of Sin and Hell, to reconcile them to himself, to recover them into a happy State, he sent his own only beloved Son out of his Bosom into this World, clothed with our Nature; by him, as by a Plenipotentiary Commissioner from himself, inviting all Men to return unto him; declaring himself by the meritorious Obedience, the expiatory Passion, the effectual Intercession of his dear Son abundantly satisfied for, and ready to grant a full Pardon of all Offences committed against him in their State of Error and Estrangement; to admit them into a State of present Indemnity and Peace, yea to settle them in perpetual Alliance and Friendship with himself: Upon most fair and gentle Terms; namely, that renouncing their erroneous Principles, and reforming their vicious course of Life, they cheerfully would embrace his merciful Overtures, and thereafter conform their Lives to his righteous Laws; the which, together with all his good Intentions concerning them, he, by the same blessed Agent, clearly discovered to them; fully by him instructing them in their Duty, and strongly encouraging them to the performance thereof by the Promise of most bountiful Rewards; his certain Love and Favour attended with endless Joy and Bliss: Thus did, as St. Paul expresseth it, the saving Grace of God appear unto all Men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World, expecting that blessed Hope.

But to render this wonderfully gracious Design successful, in a way of Wisdom, and reasonable Proceeding, accommodated to the Capacities of human Nature, it was requisite, that there should be provided convincing Arguments to persuade Men of the Truth and Reality of these Things (that indeed such an extraordinary Agent, with such a Message was come from Heaven) effectual Means of admonishing and exciting Men to a heedful Advertency towards them, competent Motives to a cordial acceptance of them; a Power also sufficient, notwithstanding their natural Impotency and Instability, to continue them in the Belief, to uphold them in the Practice of the Duties prescribed, in the Performance of the Conditions required.

For if it were not very credible, that God had truly those Intentions toward us, or if we did not much regard the Overture of them, or if we did not conceive the Business highly to concern us; or if resolving to comply with the Gospel, we yet were unable to discharge the Conditions thereof, the Design would totally be frustrated, and of it self come to nothing: To prevent which Disappointment of his merciful Intentions, Almighty God did abundantly provide, in a manner and measure suitable to the glorious Importance of them; for to the Ministry of his eternal Wisdom, he adjoined the Efficacy of his eternal Love, and blessed Spirit; the which not only conducted God our Saviour into his fleshly Tabernacle, and with unmeasurable Communications of himself did continually reside within him, but also did attend him in the conspicuous Performance of numberless miraculous Works, implying divine Power and Goodness, as exceeding not only any natural, but all created Power (such as were by mere Word and Will healing the Sick, and restoring the maimed; ejecting evil Spirits, discerning the secret Thoughts of Men, foretelling contingent Events, reviving the dead, raising himself from the Grave) which Works (some expressly, others by Parity of Reason) are ascribed



to the holy Spirit; for, *if* (saith our Lord) *I by the Spirit of God cast out Devils—*  
 Matt. 12. 28. and, God (saith St. Peter) *anointed him with the Holy Ghost, and with Power; who*  
 Acts 10. 38. *went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the Devil: And, Who*  
 Rom. 1. 4. (saith St. Paul) *was declared to be the Son of God, according to the Holy Spirit, by the*  
*resurrection from the dead: So did God afford the most evident Attestation that*  
*could be to the Truth of our Saviour's Quality, Commission and Doctrine; by*  
*so clear, and rowing Significations did God invite Men to take notice of these*  
*Things.*

But farther to induce them heartily to comply with these gracious Overtures, and to render them thoroughly available to the Purpose designed, the Salvation of Men, according to the Terms prescribed of Faith in God, and Obedience to his Commandments, God was pleased farther to resolve, and he faithfully did promise that he would impart the same *Blessed Spirit*, as a continual Guide and Assistance to all those, who seriously would entertain those Tenders of Mercy, sincerely resolving the Performance of the Conditions.

Now although the natural and ordinary manner of this divine Spirit's Operation (like that of all Spirits, and more subtle Substances) is not by violent and sensible Impressions, but rather in way of imperceptible Penetration, or gentle In-

Kal ὁ αὐτὸς ὁ Θεὸς ἀποκαλύπτει τὴν ψυχὴν  
 τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὡς πνεύματος ἁγίου, ὁ  
 ὁ μὴ πνεύματος τοῦ αἵματος, ἀλλ' ὁ  
 ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ αἵματος, ὁ ἁγίου  
 πνεύματος ἁγίου. Chryl. Tom. 6. Orat.  
 12. ad Demet.

sinuation of it self into the Subject upon which it worketh, hardly discovering it self otherwise than by the notable Effects resulting from it; and although likewise the proper and principal Effects thereof, according to divine Designation, do relate to the furthering our Performance of the said Conditions requisite toward our Salvation, that is, to the cherishing

our Faith, and quickning our Obedience; disposing Men to perform virtuous Actions, rather than to achieve wondrous Exploits; yet more fully to satisfy the

Τὸν δὲ χάρισμά τῶν πνευματικῶν  
 τὰ μὴ ἀόρατα ἐν ᾧ ἡμεῖς καθάρσασθαι  
 ἔμελλομεν, τὰ δὲ ἐν αἵματι καθαίρειν  
 οὐκ ἐστὶν πνεύματος τῶν αἱμάτων, ἀλλ' ὁ  
 πνεύματος ἁγίου. Chryl. Tom. 5. Orat. 88.

Doubtful, to convince the Incredulous (to confound the Ob-  
 stinate) World about the Truth of his Intentions, more illu-  
 striously to manifest the Completion of his Promise, more  
 surely to fortify the Faithful against the Scandals and Tem-  
 ptations, which their Profession would incur, God was plea-

fed after our Lord's Ascension, and when the Apostolical Promulgation of the Chri-  
 Acts 2. 12-43. stian Doctrine did commence, to dispense both to the Teachers and the Disciples  
 4. 14. 9. 11. thereof more liberal Communications of that *Holy Spirit*, attended with notorious,  
 16. strange and wonderful Effects, apt to provoke the Admiration of Men, to persuade  
 1 Co. 14. 25. their judgments, to prevail upon their Affections, to produce within them strong  
 Desires of partaking so high a Privilege, and excellent Endowment.

The Memorial therefore of that most gracious and glorious Dispensation, the Christian Church wisely and piously hath continually preserved, obliging us at this time peculiarly to bless GOD for that incomparable and inestimable Gift, conferred then most visibly upon the Church, and still really bestowed upon every particular Member, duly incorporated therein.

I say bestowed upon every particular Member of the Church; for the Evangelical Covenant doth extend to every Christian; and a principal Ingredient thereof is the Collation of this Spirit; which is the *Finger of God*, whereby (according to the Prophet Jeremy's Description of that Covenant) *God's Law is put into their inward Parts, and written in their Hearts; inscribed* (as St. Paul allusively speaketh) *not with Ink, but by the Spirit of the living God; not in Tables of Stone, but in the fleshy Tables of the Heart; not only as the Jewish Law represented from without to the Senses, but impressed within upon the Mind and Affections; whence God's Spirit is called the Spirit of Promise, the Donation thereof being the peculiar Promise of the Gospel; and the End of our Saviour's Undertaking is by St. Paul declared, that we might receive the Promise of the Spirit by Faith, that is by embracing Christianity might partake thereof, according to God's Promises; and the Apostolical Ministry or Exhibition of the Gospel is stiled the Ministration of the Spirit, and tasting of the heavenly Gift, and participation of the Holy Ghost is Part of a Christian's Charter; and the Suſception of Christianity is thus described by St. Paul; But we are bound to give Thanks always to God for you, Brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath chosen you from the beginning to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth; and our Saviour instructed Nicodemus, that no Man can enter into the Kingdom of God (that is, become a Christian or Subject of God's Spiritual*

Luke 11. 20.  
 Jer. 31. 33.  
 Heb. 8. 10.  
 Ezek. 11. 19.  
 John 6. 45.  
 2 Cor. 3. 3.

Πνεῦμα ὁ  
 ἐπαγγελίας.

Eph. 1. 13.  
 Gal. 3. 14.

Διακονία τοῦ  
 πνεύματος.  
 2 Cor. 3. 8.  
 Heb. 6. 4.  
 2 Thess. 2. 13.

John 3. 5.

King-



Kingdom) without being regenerated by Water, and by the Spirit, that is, without Baptism, and the spiritual Grace attending it; according as St. Peter doth in the Words adjoining to our Text imply, that the reception of the Holy Spirit is annexed to Holy Baptism; Repent (saith he) and be baptized every one of you in the name of *Acts 21. 38* Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise (that great Promise of the Holy Ghost) is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call; that is, the Holy Spirit is promised to all, how far soever distant in Place or Time, whoever shall be invited unto, and shall embrace the Christian Profession. St. John also maketh it to be the distinctive Mark of those, in whom Christ abideth, and who dwell in Christ, that is of all true Christians, to have this Spirit; Hereby (saith he) *1 John 3. 24* we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us; and, Hereby we *1 John 4. 13* know that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit; and, St. Paul denieth him to be a good Christian who is destitute thereof; Now (saith *Rom. 8. 9* he) if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; and, Know ye not, *1 Cor. 3. 16* saith he to the Corinthians, that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? That is, Do ye not understand this to be a common Privilege of all Christians, such as ye profess your selves to be? And the Conversion of Men to Christianity he thus expresseth; After the kindness and love of God our Saviour *Tit. 3. 4* toward man appeared; not by any righteous works which we had done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the laver of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; And all pious Dispositions qualifying us for entrance into Heaven and Happiness (Faith, *Gal. 5. 22* Charity, Devotion, every Grace, every Vertue) are represented to be fruits of the *Eph. 5. 9* Holy Spirit: And, the Union of all Christians into one Body; the Catholick Society of all truly faithful People, doth, according to St. Paul, result from this one Spirit, as a common Soul animating and actuating them: For (saith he) by one Spirit are *1 Cor. 12. 13* we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free; and have all been made to drink of one Spirit.

In fine, whatever some few Persons, or some petty Sects (as the Pelagians of old, the Socinians now) may have deemed, it hath been the Doctrine constantly, and with very general Consent delivered in the Catholick Church, that to all Persons by the holy Mystery of Baptism duly initiated to Christianity, or admitted into the Communion of Christ's Body, the Grace of God's Holy Spirit certainly is bestowed, enabling them to perform the Conditions of Piety and Vertue then undertaken by them; enlightning their Minds, rectifying their Wills, purifying their Affections, directing and assisting them in their Practice; the which Holy Gift (if not abused, ill treated, driven away, or quenched by their ill Behaviour) will perpetually be continued, improved and encreased to them; it is therefore by Tertullian (in his Prescriptions against Hereticks) reckoned as Part of that fundamental Rule, which was grounded upon the general Tradition, and Consent of the Christian Church, that Christ had sent the virtue of the Holy Ghost in his room, which doth act believers; to which that Article doth answer of the Apostolical Creed, in which we profess to believe the Holy Ghost; meaning, I suppose, thereby not only the bare Existence of the Holy Ghost, but also its gracious Communication and Energy.

Since therefore the collation of this eminent Gift and Favour so nearly doth concern us all; seeing it is our present Duty more especially to praise and bless God for it; seeing also we are wont to commensurate our Gratitude to our Estimation of the Benefit, unto which it relateth, let us a little consider the Worth and Excellency of this divine Gift conferred on us.

That it is transcendently Valuable we may in general hence collect, that even in our Lord's Esteem it did not only countervail, but in a manner surmount the Benefit of his Presence; *Εὐχαρίστω*, It is (saith he) expedient (or profitable) for you *John 16. 7* that I go away; God having designed, that my Absence shall be supplied by the Comforter's more beneficial Presence: And wonderfully beneficial surely must that Presence be, which could not only compensate, but render advantageous the Loss of that most benign and sweet Conversation, that tender and watchful Inspection, that wholesome and powerful Advice, that clear and lively Pattern of all Goodness shining forth in our Saviour's Life upon his Disciples: Could there be a more indulgent Master, a more discreet Guide, a more delightful Companion, a more faithful Friend, a mightier Protector, a surer Assistant, a sweeter Comforter than he?



he? Yes, it seemeth that our Saviour did apprehend, that upon some accounts those Benefits with greater Advantage might accrue to them by the Gift of his Spirit, than by his own immediate Presence; that it by internal Operation could more clearly inform the Mind, more strongly incline the Will, more vigorously affect the Heart, than any exterior Word or Example could do: Neither could our Saviour, according to the Condition of his Humanity, limited to Particularities of Time and Place, so perfectly correspond to the various Exigencies of Mankind; as that omnipotent Spirit, intimately present to, uniformly diffused through all things: Him therefore did our Saviour leave the Guardian of his otherwise Orphan Disciples; him did he substitute to undergo the Care and Tuition of them; to conduct them in the right Way, to preserve them from Dangers, to comfort them in Distresses, to manage all their Concernments, to be their Counsellour, Monitor, Advocate and Patron; by him he meant fully to make good his Word, *that he would be with them till the end of this world.*

Οὗτος ὁ πνεῦμα  
ἐμὸν ἀποστέλλω  
ἐν ὑμῖν. *John 14. 26.*  
Εἰς τὸ συντελεῖν  
τὰς ἐπαγγελίας  
αὐτοῦ. *Matt. 28. 20.*

But more distinctly to survey the many Benefits and Advantages proceeding from this excellent Gift unto us, we may observe, that on it the Foundation, the Improvement, the Completion of all our Good and Happiness do depend; that to the Holy Spirit in Truth and Justice are to be ascribed, 1. Our better State and Being. 2. Our spiritual Powers and Abilities. 3. Our good and acceptable Performances; whatever we are, whatever we can do, whatever we actually do perform as Christians.

1. We owe to the Holy Spirit our spiritual State and Being; our spiritual Life, our Freedom, our honourable Condition.

Πνεῦμα ζωο-  
ποιεῖ. *1 Cor. 15. 45.*

It is by virtue of this quickning Spirit that from Death and Corruption we are raised to an immortal and indestructible State of Life; that (as St. Paul saith) we that were dead in trespasses and sins are quickened together with Christ; we by this incorruptible seed are born again, not as formerly to a Life of Vanity and Misery, or to the Enjoyment of a few transitory Delights, tempered with many vexatious Inconveniencies, Pains and Troubles; but to sure Capacities of most solid and durable Contentment, to a living hope of an incorruptible inheritance reserved in heaven for us.

*1 Pet. 1. 3, 4.*

It is thereby we are Free-men, enjoying a true and perfect Liberty; being enfranchised from divers intolerable Slaverys, to which we naturally are subjected, and from which otherwise we could not be exempted; from the Dominion of a rigorous Law, which prescribeth hard Duties, but doth not afford Strength to perform them; apt to condemn us, but not able to convert us; from the clamorous Accusations of a guilty Conscience, with anxious Fears of Punishment, that spirit of bondage unto fear, of which St. Paul speaketh; from the Tyranny of a most crafty, spiteful and cruel Enemy, that wicked one who did captivate us at his pleasure, and detained us under his Power; from the no less unjust, no less mischievous Domination of our own Flesh, or natural Concupiscence, imposing grievous Tasks and destructive Necessities upon us; It is (saith St. Paul) the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which setteth us free from these laws of sin and of death; so that, where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

Gal. 4. 24.  
Lex ὡς οὐ-  
μὴν ποῦντ  
στρουε, non  
potuit mentem  
convertere.

Ambr. 8. 15.

Rom. 8. 15.

2 Tim. 2. 26.

Eph. 2. 2.

Rom. 8. 2.

2 Cor. 3. 17.

From such base Thraldoms we thereby are redeemed, and not only so, but are advanc'd to an honourable Condition, are ennobled with illustrious Relations, are entitled to glorious Privileges: All the Benefits and Immunities contained in the Charter of the new Jerusalem, all the Advantages and Privileges appropriated to God's Court and Family thereby appertain unto us; for we have (saith St. Paul)

Eph. 2. 18, 19.

Rev. 1. 6.

1 Pet. 2. 9.

access by one Spirit unto the Father, and are thence no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the Saints, and of the household of God: By this holy union we are consecrated Kings and Priests unto God; by Participation of this immortal seed, we are engrafted into Alliance with the heavenly King, become Children of God, Brethren of Christ, Heirs of Paradise (an infinitely better Paradise than that from which we formerly were excluded;) for this is that *πνεῦμα υἱοθεσίας*, that Spirit which constituteth us the Sons of God, qualifying us to be so by dispositions resembling God, and filial Affections toward him; certifying us that we are so,

Gal. 4. 6.

Rom. 8. 15.

John 1. 13.

Rom. 8. 14.

Rom. 8. 16.

and causing us by a free Instinct to cry *Abba Father*, running into his Bosom of Love, and flying under the Wings of his Mercy in all our Needs and Distresses; whence as many as are led by the Spirit, they (saith St. Paul) are the Sons of God; and, the Spirit it self beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; yea, which may seem yet a farther Pitch of Dignity, we, by Intervention of this Spirit, are united



united and incorporated into *Christ* himself, being made living Members of his Body, partaking a common Life and Sense with him; by it we are compacted into the same spiritual Edifice, dedicated to the Worship and Inhabitation of God; our Bodies and Souls are made Temples of his Divinity, Thrones of his Majesty, Orbs of his celestial Light, Paradises of his blissful Presence; for, *In whom* (saith Eph. 2. 26. St. Paul) *ye are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit*; and, *Know* 1 Cor. 3. 16. *ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*

By the *Holy Spirit* we are entitled in these unconceivably glorious Privileges, and by it only we are assured of them, to our Comfort; the Gift of it as it is a great Part of them, and the chief Cause, so it is a sure Confirmation and Pledge; *Ye*, saith St. Paul, *were sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance*; and, *It is God who did establish us with you in Christ, and anointed us, and also sealed us, and gave the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts*; all which Phrases do import the same thing, that is, a comfortable Assurance concerning the Reality of the Benefits by divine Grace exhibited and promised to us.

2. Neither only relatively and extrinsically is our State bettered and exalted from Death to Life, from Slavery to Freedom, from Baseness to Dignity; but our selves answerably are changed, and amended by the same *Holy Spirit*, with a real and 2 Cor. 5. 17. intrinsic Alteration, transforming us into other things, much different from what we were in our former natural State; by that *renovation of the Holy Ghost*, of which Tit. 3. 5. St. Paul speaketh, we are (saith he) *renewed in the Spirit of our mind*; so that not Eph. 4. 23. only the decayed Frame of our Soul is thereby repaired and reformed, but its Powers are much improved and enlarged; we are thence endowed with new and better Faculties, as it were; with quicker Apprehensions, with sincerer Judgments, with righter Inclinations, with nobler Passions, than we had before (yea than we could have had in our original State;) so that in the Language of Holy Scripture we thence become *new men, and new creatures, created according to God in righteousness and true holiness*; according to God, that is in conformity to the divine Perfections of Rectitude in Mind and Will, so as to resemble God in a higher Degree, and more worthy Respects than formerly. Our Father *Adam* was made as Eph. 4. 24. 2 Cor. 5. 17. Col. 3. 10. Eph. 4. 23. 2. 10. Col. 3. 10. 1 Cor. 15. 45. a Creature endowed with Life and Sense, furnished with Powers and Appetites disposing to acquire, preserve and enjoy the Conveniencies agreeable to that Frame; and we naturally are *ψυχαι ἄνθρωποι*, animal men: such as naturally 1 Cor. 2. 14. do apprehend, do affect, do pursue things concerning this present Life; the Pleasures of Sense, and the satisfactions of Fancy; Freedom from Want and Pain, Security from Danger and Disturbance, together with the Means we suppose conducive to those, Wealth, Honour and Power; these are those *desires of the flesh and of the mind*, the things which according to our natural Temper and Frame we like and approve; which most Men therefore do highly value, passionately love, and earnestly seek: Nor doth Nature only incline us to a Complacency in these things, but customary Fruition greatly endeareth them to us; so that we continually improve our Acquaintance, and contract a firmer Alliance with them; but spiritual and divine things (*the things of the Spirit of God*, as St. Paul calleth them) we cannot \* receive, that is, simply of our selves, without Aid of another interior Principle, we have no Capacity to apprehend them, no Disposition to entertain them, no Strength to pursue them; they (as the Apostle saith) are *foolishness to us*, that is, incongruous to our prejudicate Notions, and insipid to our corrupt Palates.

Such Doctrines as these; that our Felicity consisteth not in affluence of temporal Enjoyments, but in dispositions of Soul crossing our Humours, curbing our Appetites, and quelling our Passions; in conformity of Practice to Rules distastful to our Sense; in the Love and Favour of an invisible Being; in reversion of an Estate not to be possessed until after our Death in another World; that none of these present things do well deserve our serious Regard, Affection or Care, and that it is blamable to be solicitous about them; that naked Goodness (how low, weak and poor soever) is to be chosen before all the specious Poms and Glories of this World; that the secret Testimony of Conscience is to be preferred before all the Approbation and Applause of Men; that the Hope of future Joy should overway the Desire of present most certain and sensible Delights; that the Loss of all things may sometime be deemed our greatest Gain, being contented our highest Honour, enduring Afflictions our most desirable Condition, Death our surest Welfare, a Cross preferable to a Crown; that accordingly it is often Advantageous



vantageous and Expedient for us, and a Duty incumbent on us, willingly to discard our dearest Contents of Life, to sacrifice our most valued Interests, to forsake our nearest Relations, to refuse what we most affect, to undertake what we most distaste, to undergo without reluctance or regret the most bitter Accidents that can befall us; that we must (to use the *holy Style*) *hate our own souls, deny our selves, and take up our cross, quit houses and lands, desert kindred and friends; renounce* (or bid farewell) *to all that he hath, or owneth; cut off our right hands, and pluck out our right eyes; circumcise our hearts, mortify our members; crucify our flesh with its affections and lusts; be crucified to the world; to account all worldly things damage, dross and dung in comparison to spiritual goods.* That we must so far remit and restrain our self-love, as to love all Men, not excluding our greatest Enemies, as our selves; so as not only to part freely with our particular Accommodations, but upon occasion, in Imitation of our Saviour, to *lay down our lives for them*; so as not only to comport with their Infirmities, but to require their extremest Injuries with good Will and good Turns; so as to do all good to all Men, to return no evil to any; *to bless them that curse us, to do good to them that hate us, to pray for them which despitefully use us, and persecute us.*

These, and such like Dictates of the Spirit are *hard*, and harsh sayings, absurd to our natural Conceit, and abominable to our carnal Humour; we cannot readily swallow them, we cannot easily digest them; in respect to them we as mere Men are *ἐχθροὶ τῇ διανοίᾳ*, enemies in our mind, or reason; our Discourse presently doth contradict and oppose them: Our Reason is shut up, and barr'd with various Appetites, Humours and Passions against such Truths, nor can we admit them into our Hearts, except God by his Spirit do *set open our mind*, and work a free Passage for them into us; it is *he who commanded the light to shine out of darkness*, must (as St. Paul speaketh) *illuminate our hearts with the knowledge of these things*; an *Unction from the holy one*, clearing our Eyes, softning our Hearts, healing our distempered Faculties, must (as St. John informeth us) *teach and persuade us this sort of Truths*; a hearty Faith of these seemingly incredible Propositions must indeed be, as St. Paul calleth it, *the gift of God*, proceeding from that *Spirit of Faith*, whereof the same Apostle speaketh; such Faith is not (as St. Basil saith) *engendered by Geometrical necessities, but by the effectual operations of the Holy Ghost: Flesh and Blood will not reveal unto us, nor can any man with clear Confidence say, that Jesus* (the Authour, Master and Exemplifier of these Doctrines) *is the Lord, (the Messiah, the infallible Prophet, the universal Law-giver, the Son of the living God) but by the Holy Ghost: Every Spirit, which sincerely confesseth him to be the Christ, who hath enjoined these Precepts, we may with St. John safely conclude to be of God*; for of our selves we are not sufficient (as the Apostle saith) *λογίζεσθαι τι, to reason out, or collect any of these things*; we never of our own accord, without divine Attraction should come unto Christ, that is, should effectually consent unto, and embrace his Institution, consisting of such unpalatable Propositions, and Precepts; hardly would his own Disciples, who had so long enjoyed the Light of his Instruction and Conversation, have admitted it, if he had not granted to them that *Spirit of Truth*, whose work it was *ἐδηγῆναι*, to lead them in this unknown and uncouth way, *ἀναγίγνωσκειν*, to tell them again and again, that is, to instill and inculcate these crabbed Truths upon them, *ἐπιμνησκόμεναι*, to admonish, excite and urge them to the marking and minding them; hardly, I say, without the Guidance of this Spirit would our Lord's Disciples have admitted divers Evangelical Truths, as our Lord himself told them; *I have (said he) many things beside to say to you, but ye cannot as yet bear them; but when he, the Spirit of Truth shall come, he shall conduct you into all truth.*

As for the mighty *Sages of the World*, the learned *Scribes*, the subtle *Disputers*, the deep *Politicians*, the *wise Men according to the Flesh*, the Men of most refined Judgment, and improved Reason in the World's Eye, they were more ready to deride, than to regard, to impugn, than to admit these Doctrines; to the *Greeks who sought Wisdom*, the Preaching of them did seem *Foolishness*.

It is true, some few Sparks or Flashes of this divine Knowledge may possibly be driven out by rational Consideration; *Philosophy* may yield some twilight Glimmerings thereof; common Reason may dictate a faint Consent unto, may produce a cold Tendency after some of these Things; but a clear Perception, and

a re-



a resolute Persuasion of Mind, that full assurance of Faith, and inflexible Confession of Hope, which the Apostle to the Hebrews speaketh of; That all riches of the full assurance of Understanding, that abundant Knowledge of the divine Will in all spiritual Wisdom and Understanding, with which St. Paul did pray that his Colossians might be replenished; these so perfect Illustrations of the Mind, so powerful Convictions of the Heart do argue immediate Influences from the Fountain of Life and Wisdom, the divine Spirit: No external Instruction could infuse, no interior Discourse could excite them; could penetrate those Opacities of Ignorance, and dissipate those thick Mists of Prejudice, wherein Nature and Custom do involve us; could so thoroughly awaken the lethargick Stupidity of our Souls; could supple the refractory Stiffness of our Wills, could mollify the stony Hardness of our Hearts, could void our natural Averſation to such Things, and quell that *φθονος* & *ουνος*, that carnal Mind, the which St. Paul saith is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, Rom. 8. 7; neither indeed can be; could depress those *υψηλα*, those lofty Towers of Self-conceit, reared against the Knowledge of God, and demolish those *οχυρωματα*, those Bulwarks of Self-Will and perverse Stomach opposed against the Impressions of divine Truth; and captivate *πᾶν νοημα*, every Conceit and Device of ours to the Obedience of Christ, and his Discipline: Well therefore did St. Paul pray in behalf of his Ephesians, that God would bestow on them that Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the acknowledgment of him, and that the Eyes of their Mind (or Reason) might be enlightened, so as to know the hope of their Calling; that is, to understand and believe the Doctrines of Christianity, which upon Condition of Obedience did promise Felicity to them.

So is the Light of spiritual Knowledge, together with a Temper of Mind, disposing to receive it, communicated to us; but farther also by the same divine Power and Spirit are our vital Heat and Vigour, our active Strength and Courage imparted. For as mere Men, we are not only blind to discern, dull to conceive, backward to undertake the necessary Duties of Vertue and Piety, but we are also dead, heartless and unwieldy, lame and impotent, indisposed and incapable to perform them: Though we should competently apprehend our Duty, and our Spirit thence should be willing, yet our Flesh, or natural Power, is weak; Matt. 26. 41. we may (as St. Paul instructeth us) in our Judgment consent that the Law is holy, just and good; and consequently to will that it may be present to us; that is, we may be desirous, and in some Measure resolved to obey it, yea we may have some interior rational Complacence therein; and yet not have Ability to act according to these Dictates and Desires; for to will is present to me (saith he in the Person of a Man endowed only with natural Strength, abstracting from the subsidiary Vertue and Operation of the divine Spirit,) but to perform that which is good, I find not; I perceive not any means or way of affecting it; Knowledge therefore, and Willingness to do good doth not suffice; we need a prevalent Force to stir and raise this unwieldy Bulk to overpoise our natural Propensions, to subdue the Reluctancies, and check the Importunities of Sense, to correct bad Nature, and reclaim from bad Custom: The natural Might and Policy of our single Reason, being very feeble and shallow, is not fitly matched to encounter that potent Confederacy of Enemies, which continually with open Violence doth invade and assail us; or which by clandestine Wiles doth watch to circumvent and supplant us: Is it easy for us not to dread the Frowns, nor to be charmed by the Flatteries; to flight both the Hatred and Favour; to abide the Persecutions, and to avoid the Allurements of this World; this wicked, violent, deceitful World, which is ever ready to deter from Good, and entice us to Evil? Is it easy to restrain and repress those fleshy Lusts, which (as St. Peter saith) do war against our Souls, combating them with their own Forces; using their own Faculties and Members as Weapons against them? James 4. 1. Is it easy to rescue our selves from that other Law in our Members, that warreth against the Law of our Understanding, and captivateth us to the Law of Sin? Is it a small Matter to set upon, to grapple with, to knock down that Gigantick Philistine, inordinate Self-Love (the Root of Injustice, Pride, Envy, Malice, Ambition and Avarice within us) which naturally is so tall and stout; which, if not check'd

in

Πανεσφορια & πιστης Heb. 10. 22  
Ομολογια & ελπιδος αλλαντος Heb.  
10. 23.

Πας πλῆτος & πανεσφοριας & ουνε-  
σιως. Col. 2. 2. Col. 1. 9.

Rom. 8. 7.

2 Cor. 10. 4. 5.

Eph. 1. 17.

Τῆς διαβολας.

Rom. 7. 12, 16. Συμφωνει τῷ νόμῳ  
ὅτι καλος.

Rom. 7. 18.  
Συνιδωμαι τῷ νόμῳ νῦν & ἔστω ἀνθρώ-  
πον. Rom. 7. 22.

Rom. 7. 18.

Τὸ ὅ κατε-  
ραζομαι τὸ  
καλὸν ἐκ ἐν-  
σπου.

1 Pet. 2. 11.

James 4. 1.

Rom. 7. 23.



in its Progress, will daily grow in Stature and Strength? Is it a slight Business to detect, to counterplot, to decline or defeat those *malicious*, those *Devises*, or *subtile Trains*, and Sleights of the Tempter; to *wrestle with Principals*, with Powers, with the Rulers of this darksome World, with the spiritualities of *Wickedness*, surrounding us? May we not reasonably in Comparison to these mighty *Antagonists* be (as the Children of Israel anciently were) *in our own fight as Grasshoppers*, quite despairing by our own Strength to vanquish, to resist them?

In our Spiritual Conflict with such dangerous and dreadful Adversaries, we do need an *ἐμπόριον τῷ πνεύματι* (as St. Paul speaketh, that is) a large supply of the Spirit, a Collation of auxiliary Forces, an habitual Support derived from that invincible and infallible Spirit, which only is stronger, and wiser than they; we need to be armed with that *δυναμὶς ἐξ ὀψίων*, that power from on high, or (Esa. 59. 19.) heavenly Might, whereby the Apostles were enabled to fight their noble Battles, and to achieve their glorious Conquests, subduing the rebellious World, and baffling the Powers of Darkness; we need *δυναμὶς ἀγαθή*, *δύναμις*, to be strengthened with Might by Christ's Spirit in the inward Man, as St. Paul expresseth it; whereby, as he, *we may πάντα ἰσχύειν*, be able to do all Things, or John 15. 5. to accomplish the most difficult Parts of our Day; without which we can do

2 Cor. 3. 5. Phil. 2. 13.  
Col. 1. 12.  
*τὸ πνεῦμα συνεισφέρει τὰς ἀδυναμίας ἡμῶν*—Rom. 8. 26.

nothing, that is, cannot discharge the most easy Things required of us; all our Sufficiency is of God; it is he, who out of his goodness doth effect in us both to will and to perform; his Spirit taking part with our Infirmities, and thereby giving us Advantage over all Opposition and Difficulty. The chief Reason why we do not sin, or persist in a Course of Disobedience to the Laws of God, is, as St. John telleth us, because the divine Seed abideth in us, that Root of divine Life, and vital Activity implanted in us by the holy Spirit; that divine Nature (as St. Peter stileth it) that Principle and Spring of spiritual Motion by him inserted in us; from which only

Seed or Nature do sprout out all heavenly Graces and Vertues.

*Ὁ δὲ θεὸς ἐμαρτυρεῖται ἐν καρδίᾳ ἡμῶν τὸ πνεῦμα ἡμῶν ἐνεργεῖται.*  
Chryl.  
*Πῶς, ὅτι πνεῦμα, ὃ μόνον ἐνδοξάζει τὸν ἀγαθόν.* Chryl.  
Rom. 5. 5. Eph. 5. 9.

The principal and original Virtue, Charity (the root, the fountain, the mother of all goodness, as St. Chrysostome calleth it) even that shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us, as St. Paul telleth us; and the fruit (saith he) of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness and truth; and, Love, Peace, Long-suffering, Benignity, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance are by the same divine Apostle reckoned Streams from the same Source, Fruits of the same rich and goodly Stock: To it generally are attributed all Purification of our Hearts, Mortification of our Lusts, Sanctification of our Lives, and consequently Salvation of our Souls: *Ye (saith St. Paul) are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God; and, God hath chosen us from the beginning to Salvation by Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth; and, Having (saith St. Peter) purified our Souls in obedience to the Truth, by the Spirit, unto Charity unfeigned; and, If (saith St. Paul again) by the Spirit ye mortify the Deeds of the Flesh, ye shall live; Thus doth our spiritual Being and State, together with our Life and active Powers depend upon the Holy Spirit; and not only so, but*

3. The continued Substance and Preservation, the actual Use and Exercise of them, all our discreet Conduct, all our good Practice do rely upon him: It is true of our Spiritual, no less than of our natural Life. *If he doth avert his Face, we are troubled; if he doth substract his Influence, we die and return unto our Dust: Upon all Occasions we do need his Direction, Aid and Comfort; for the way of Man (as the Prophet saith) is not in himself, it is not in Man that walketh to direct his steps; It is the Lord (as the Psalmist saith) that ordereth the steps of a good Man, and upholdeth him with his hand; we have all need to pray with that good Man; Cause me to know the way, wherein I should walk; teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God; thy Spirit is good, lead me into the Land of Uprightness.*

We are vain and uncertain in our Opinions, fickle and irresolute in our Purposes, slow and heavy in our Proceedings; apt to faint and falter, to stumble and slip in all our Practice; we do need therefore this sure Oracle to consult in our Doubts and Darkneses; this faithful Friend to direct and advise us in our Affairs; this constant Monitor to rowse, and quicken us in our Undertakings; this powerful

Guar-



Guardian to support and establish us in our Ways; It is, in respect to good Men, this steady Hand that holdeth the Helm, and gently steereth their Course through the blind Tracts of religious Practice; withdrawing them from those dangerous Shelves of Error and Temptation, upon which they are apt to split; it is this heavenly Gale, that filleth their Sails with constant Resolution, and fairly driveth them forward in their Voyage toward eternal Bliss. He softly doth whisper and insinuate good Thoughts into us; doth kindle pious Desires, doth cherish virtuous Intentions, doth promote honest Endeavours; he seasonably checketh and restraineth us from Sin; he faithfully reproveth and upbraideth us for committing it; he raiseth wholesome Remorse, Shame and Displeasure for our Unworthiness and Folly; He sweetly warmeth our cold Affections, inflaming our Hearts with Devotion toward God; he qualifyeth us, and encourageth us to approach the Throne of Grace, breeding in us Faith and humble Confidence, prompting us fit Matter of Request, becoming our Advocate and Intercessor for the good Success of our Prayers; *Through Christ Jesus (saith St. Paul) we have access by one Spirit unto the Father; and, The Spirit helpeth our Infirmities; for we know not what we should ask for as we ought, but the Spirit it self intercedeth for us.* Eph. 2. 18. Rom. 8. 26.

He guardeth us, he standeth by us, he sustaineth us in all Trials, and Temptations, affording Grace sufficient to escape or to endure them; *not suffering us to be tempted above what we are able.* 2 Cor. 12. 2. 1 Cor. 10. 13.

He supporteth and comforteth us in our Afflictions and Distresses of all Kinds, of our inward and outward Estate: This David knew when in his Penitential Agonies he prayed, *Cast me not away from thy Presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me; restore unto me the Joy of thy Salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit;* this those first Christians felt, who under Persecutions and all outward Discouragements were yet filled with Joy, and did walk in the comfort of the Holy Ghost; whence that Testimony of St. Paul concerning the Thessalonians; *Ye were followers of me, and of the Lord, receiving the Word in much Affliction with Joy of the Holy Ghost;* by it the blessed Saints, Martyrs and Confessors being inspired, did not only with admirable Patience, but Incredible Alacrity undergo the extremest Losses, Ignominies and Tortures which the spite of Hell, and rage of the World could inflict on them.

It is in fine, this Holy Spirit, which is the sole Authour and Spring of all true Delight, of all real Content within us; of that *unspeakable Joy in believing, that gayety of Hope, that Satisfaction in well-doing;* the partaking of his Society, Influence and Consolation is indeed the most delicious Repast, and richest Cordial of our Soul; the nearest Resemblance, the sweetest Foretaste of Paradise. 1 Pet. 1. 8. Rom. 15. 13. Heb. 3. 6.

So many, so great; yea far more, far greater than, should the time give me leave, I could enumerate or express, are the Benefits accruing to us from this most excellent Gift of God, by him graciously conferred upon all good Christians; for which we should correspondently endeavour with all our Hearts to praise and thank him; in all our Lives to make grateful and worthy Returns for it; especially by well using it to the greatest Purposes, for which it was bestowed, of enabling us to serve God, of preserving us from Sin, of conducting us to eternal Salvation.

Let us earnestly invite this Holy Guest unto us, by our Prayers unto him, who hath promised to bestow his Spirit upon those which ask it; to impart *this living Stream* to every one, which *thirsteth* after it; let us willingly receive him into our Hearts, let us treat him with all kind Usage, with all humble Observance. Let us not exclude him by supine Neglect, or rude Resistance; let us not grieve him by our perverse and froward Behaviour toward him: Let us not tempt him by our fond Presumptions, or base Treacheries; let us not quench his heavenly Light and Heat by our foul Lusts and Passions: But let us admit gladly his gentle Illapses; let us hearken to his faithful Suggestions; let us comply with his kindly Motions; let us demean our selves modestly, consistently, and officiously toward him; that we may do so, God of his infinite Mercy grant unto us, through *Jesus Christ our Lord;* to whom with the same *Holy Spirit* for ever be all Glory and Praise. Amen. Luke 11. 33. John 7. 37. 38, 39. Acts 7. 51. Eph. 4. 30. Isa. 63. 10. Acts 5. 9. 1 Thes. 5. 1. 9.

O God the Strength of all them that put their trust in thee, mercifully accept our Prayers; and because through the weakness of our mortal Nature we can do no good thing without thee, grant us the help of thy grace, that in keeping of thy Commandments we may please thee both in will and deed, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



...the gift of the Holy Ghost is not given to all men, but only to those who are called by the Father, and chosen by the Son, and sanctified by the Spirit. This gift is the seal of our adoption, and the earnest of our inheritance. It is the power of God, which is poured into our hearts, and which enables us to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. It is the love of God, which is shed abroad in our hearts, and which binds us to God and to our brethren. It is the wisdom of God, which is revealed unto us, and which enables us to understand the deep things of God. It is the peace of God, which is the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, and which is the fruit of His Spirit. It is the joy of God, which is the gift of His Father, and which is the fruit of His Spirit. It is the power of God, which is the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, and which is the fruit of His Spirit. It is the love of God, which is shed abroad in our hearts, and which binds us to God and to our brethren. It is the wisdom of God, which is revealed unto us, and which enables us to understand the deep things of God. It is the peace of God, which is the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, and which is the fruit of His Spirit. It is the joy of God, which is the gift of His Father, and which is the fruit of His Spirit.

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A  
D E F E N C E  
O F T H E  
Blessed T R I N I T Y.

T R I N I T Y - S U N D A Y , 1 6 6 3 .

Φύσει μὴ ἀπαιεῖ λόγῳ. πατὴρ καὶ υἱὸς καὶ ἁγίον πνεῦμα, καὶ οὗτοι τὸ ἀντικείμενον λόγον ἐλθόντες ἐν τῇ  
ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντες, ὅσα μὲν τὸ ὑποκείμενον, καὶ ὁ ζῶν καὶ  
καὶ ὁ ἀντικείμενον. καὶ ὁ υἱὸς καὶ ὁ ἁγίον πνεῦμα, καὶ ὁ υἱὸς καὶ ὁ ἁγίον πνεῦμα, καὶ ὁ υἱὸς  
καὶ ὁ ἁγίον πνεῦμα. Greg. Naz. Orat. 26.

C O L . I I I . 2 .

*Set your Affections on Things above.*

ἑστηκὶ τὸ  
ἄνω.

**F**OR understanding this Apostolical Precept, two Particulars must be considered; first the Act, *φρονεῖν* (which is rendred to *set our Affections*) then the Object, *τὰ ἄνω*, *things above*; these we briefly shall explain.

The Word *φρονεῖν* doth primarily, and also according to common Use, denote an Advertency, or intent Application of the Mind upon any Object: Of the Mind, that is of a Man's Soul, especially of its rational Part; so as to include the Powers of Understanding, Will, Affection, Activity; whence it may imply direction of our Understanding to know; of our Will to chuse and embrace; of our Affection to love, desire, relish; of our Activity to pursue any good (real or apparent) which is proposed: According to which most comprehensive Sense (suited the Nature of the Thing) I do take the Word, supposing that St. Paul doth enjoin us to employ all our mental Faculties in Study, Choice, Passion, Endeavour upon supernal Things.

The *τὰ ἄνω* (things above) may be so taken, as to import all things relating to our spiritual Life here, or our future State hereafter; the which do either actually subsist above in Heaven, or have a final Reference thither: So they may comprize, 1. The substantial Beings, to whom we stand Related, owe Respect, perform Duty. 2. The State and Condition of our spiritual Life here, or hereafter, as we are Servants and Subjects of God, Citizens of Heaven, Candidates of Immortal Happiness. 3. Rules to be observed, Qualities to be acquired, Actions to be performed, Means to be used by us in regard to the superiour Place and State.

Of these things the incomparably Principal and supreme, the *τὸ ὑπεράνω*, is the ever most Glorious and Blessed Trinity; to the minding of which this Day is peculiarly Dedicated, and the which indeed is always the most excellent, most beneficial, most comfortable Object of our Contemplation and Affection; wherefore upon it I shall now immediately fix my Discourse.



The Sacred TRINITY may be considered, either as it is in it self wrapt up in unexplicable Folds of Mystery ; or as it hath discovered it self operating in wonderful Methods of Grace towards us.

As it is in it self, 'tis an Object too bright and dazzling for our weak Eye to fasten upon, an Abyss too deep for our short Reason to fathom ; I can only say, That we are so bound to mind it, as to exercise our Faith, and express our Humility, in willingly believing, in submissively adoring those high Mysteries which are revealed in the Holy Oracles concerning it, by that Spirit it self, *which searcheth the Depths of God*, and by that only Son of God, who residing in his Father's Bosom, hath thence brought them forth, and *expounded them* to us, so far as was fit for our Capacity and Use : And the Lectures to read by the *Eternal Wisdom of God*, the Propositions uttered by the Mouth of *Truth it self*, we are obliged with a docile Ear, and a credulous Heart, to entertain.

Exord. 12.  
Joh. 1. 18.

That there is one Divine Nature or Essence, common unto Three Persons incomprehensibly united, and ineffably distinguished ; united in Essential Attributes, distinguished by peculiar Idioms and Relations ; all equally infinite in every divine Perfection, each different from other in order and manner of Subsistence ; that there is a mutual Inexistence of one in all, and all in one ; a Communication without any Deprivation or Diminution in the Communicant ; an Eternal Generation, and an Eternal Procession, without Precedence or Succession, without proper Causality or Dependence ; a Father imparting his own, and the Son receiving his Father's Life, and a Spirit issuing from both, without any division, or multiplication of Essence : These are Notions which may well puzzle our Reason in conceiving how they agree, but should not stagger our Faith in assenting that they are true ; upon which we should meditate, not with hope to comprehend, but with disposition to admire, veiling our Faces in the Presence, and prostrating our Reason at the Feet of Wisdom so far transcending us.

Joh. 10. 38.  
14. 10.  
17. 21.

There be those, who, because they cannot untie, dare to cut in sunder these sacred Knots ; who, because they cannot fully conceive it, dare flatly to deny them ; who, instead of confessing their own Infirmary, do charge the plain Doctrines and Assertions of Holy Scripture with Impossibility. Others seem to think they can demonstrate these Mysteries by Arguments grounded upon Principles of natural Light ; and express it by Similitudes derived from common Experience. To repress the Presumption of the former, and to restrain the Curiosity of the latter, the following Considerations (improved by your Thoughts) may perhaps somewhat conduce.

Nobis ad intellectum pectus angustum est, &c. Min. F.  
Τὸν μὲν δὲ ποτὶ ὅλην τὴν παρὰ τὸν θεὸν τὴν πάλαι ἐπεὶ τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν. Plato in Tim.

1. We may consider, that our Reason is no competent or capable Judge concerning Propositions of this Nature, *Our Breast* (as *Minatius* speaketh) *is a narrow Vessel, that will not hold much Understanding* ; 'tis not sufficient, nor was ever designed to sound such Depths, to descry the radical Principles of all Being, to reach the extreme Possibilities of Things. Such an intellectual Capacity is vouchsafed to us as doth suit to our Degree (the lowest Rank of Intelligent Creatures) as becometh our Station in this inferiour Part of the World, as may qualify us to discharge the petty Businesses committed to our Management, and the facile Duties incumbent on us : But to know what God is, how he subsisteth, what he can, what he should do, by our natural Perspicacity, or by any Means we can use, farther than he pleaseth to reveal, doth not suit to the meanness of our Condition, or the narrowness of our Capacity ; these really are the most elevated Sublimities, and the abstrusest Subtilties that are, or can be in the nature of Things ; he that can penetrate them, may erect his Tribunal any where in the World, and pretend justly that nothing in Heaven or Earth is exempted from his Judgment : But in truth, how unfit our Reason is to exercise such universal Jurisdiction, we may discern by comparing it to our Sense ; it is obvious that many Beasts do (by advantage of a finer Sense) see, hear, smell Things imperceptible to us ; and were it not very unreasonable to conclude that such Things do not exist, or are in themselves altogether insensible, because they do not at all appear to us ? Is it not evident, that we ought to impute their imperceptibility (respecting us) to the defect of our Sense, to its dulness and grossness, in regard to the subtilty of those Objects ? Even so may Propositions in themselves, and in regard to the Capacity of higher Understandings (for there are gradual Differences in Understanding, as well

as



as in Sense) be true and very intelligible, which to our inferior Reason seem unintelligible, or repugnant to the Prenotions with which our Soul is imbrued; and our not discerning those Truths, may argue the Blindness and Weakness of our Understanding, not any Fault or Inconsistency in the Things themselves; nor should it cause us any wise to distrust them, if they come recommended to our Belief by competent Authority.

To such Purposes indeed the Holy Scripture frequently doth vilify our Reason and Knowledge: Every Man (saith Jeremiah) is brutish in knowledge. The Lord (saith the Psalmist) knoweth the thoughts of Men (of wise Men, as St. Paul quoteth it) that they are vanity. Vain Man (saith he in Job) would be wise, though Man be born like a wild Asses Colt; (that is, however we affect to seem wise, yet to be dull as an Ass, to be wild as a Colt, is natural to us.) My Thoughts (saith God in the Prophet) are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways: For as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my ways than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. God's Wisdom is as the Heavens, the highest and top of all Wisdom; Man's as the Earth, beneath which there is no Degree, but that of Hell and Darkness: We therefore in this respect are unfit to determine concerning Things so exceedingly sublime and subtle.

2. We may consider, That not only the imperfection of our Reason it self, but the manner of using it doth incapacitate us to judge about these Matters. Had we competent skill to sail in this deep Ocean, yet we do want a Gale to drive us, and a Compass to steer our Course by therein; we have not any firm grounds to build our Judgment on, or certain Rules to square it by. We cannot effectually discourse or determine upon any Subject, without having Principles homogeneous and pertinent thereto (that are *ὡς τῇ αὐτῇ οὐσυστάσει*, cognate and congruous to the Subject-Matter, as the Philosopher speaketh) upon which to found our Argumentation. Now all the Principles we can have, are either originally innate to our Minds; or afterward immediately infused by God, or by external Instruction from him disclosed to us; or acquired by our Experience, and Observation of Things incurring our Sense; or framed by our Reason, comparing those Means; of which the three former Sorts are most arbitrarily communicated, and both for number and kind depend upon the free Pleasure of him, who distributeth them according to a measure suitable to each Man's Occasions, estimated by himself: How many those are, and how far they may qualify us to judge, or discourse about those transcendent Matters, is hard to define; but most certainly they never can clash with one another; no Light in any manner imparted by God can obscure the Doctrine declared by him, no Doctrine can thwart Principles instilled by him. The latter Sorts appertain only to material and sensible Objects; which therefore can only enable us to deduce, or to examine Conclusions relating to them; and being applied to Things of another kind, are abused, so as to become apt to produce great Mistakes: As for Instance, most antient Philosophers observing, that the Changes and Vicissitudes in Nature were generally, by the same Matters, undergoing several Alterations, or putting on different Shapes; and that Bodies once being in Rest, did usually consist in that State, until by Impulse of other Bodies they were put into Motion, did thence frame such Axioms, or Principles of Discourse, *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, and *Quicquid movetur, ab alio movetur*: Which Propositions supposing them true in relation to the present Conditions and Powers of sensible Things, yet were it unlawful to stretch them unto Beings of another kind and nature (to Beings immaterial and insensible) or to infer thence generally, that in the utmost possibility of Things there is not any creative, or any self-motive Power: Even as from the like Premises it would be vain to conclude, that there be no other Beings subsistent beside those which strike our Senses, or discover themselves by sensible Effects. In like manner, it cannot be reasonable out of Principles drawn from ordinary Experience, about these most low and imperfect Things, to collect, that there can be no other kind of Unions, of Distinctions, of Generations, of Processions, than such as our own gross Sense doth represent to us: Reason it self more forcibly doth oblige us to think that to sublimer Beings there do pertain Modes of Existence and Action, Unions and Distinctions, Influences and Emanations of a more high and perfect kind, such as our coarse Apprehension

Jer. 10. 145

Psal. 103. 14

1 Cor. 3. 10

Job 11. 12

Isa. 55. 8

Annal. 1. 7

1 Cor. 13. 12

Rom. 12. 3

Id quod Deus

est, secundum

id quod est nec

humano ser-

mone edici,

nec humanis

auribus per-

cipi, nec hu-

manis sensibus

colligi potest.

Novat. de

Trin. cap. 7.

Ὁνομασασθε

ᾧ, ὡς ἡμεῖς ἐ-

φικτόν, ἐν τοῖς

ἡμετέροις τοῖς

ῥῆματι. Naz.

Or. 37. de Sp. S.



Can queritur quid tres, magna in-  
pud humanum laborat eloquium; di-  
sum est tamen tres persona, non ut  
illud diceretur, sed ut taceretur. Aug.  
de Trin. 5. 9.

Κόσμος ὅμοιος τῷ πατρὶ ὁ  
μῦθος δὲ. Naz. Orai. 45. (ad  
Evagr.)

1 Cor. 2. 13.

Πνευματικὰ πνευματικῶς συζη-  
ται.

prehension cannot adequate, nor our rude Language express; which we, perhaps, have no Faculty subtle enough to conceive distinctly, nor can attain any congruous Principles, from which to discourse solidly about them: To judge of these Things, if we will not, against the Philosopher's Rule, μεταβαίνειν εἰς ἄλλο γένος, shift kinds, or use improper and impertinent Arguments, we must compare spiritual Things with spiritual, so as to draw Conclusions about Spirituals only from Principles revealed by God's Spirit, the sole Master of Spiritual Science; so also as to express them not ἐν διδασκαλίᾳ ἀνθρώπου σοφίας λόγῳ, in Terms devised by human Wisdom, but

in such as the Holy Spirit hath suggested; for ἄνθρωπος ἀνθρώπου, a Man endowed merely with common Sense (or natural Reason) cannot ἀλγεῖν, apprehend, or perceive those Things of God, which only the Spirit of God doth know. To improve and press which Consideration farther,

3. We may consider the Weakness and Shortness of our Reason, even about Things most familiar and easy to us; the little or nothing we by our utmost Diligence can attain to know concerning their intrinsic Essences, their Properties, their Causes and Manners of Production. What do we more commonly hear, than earnest Complaints from the most industrious Searchers of natural Knowledge concerning the great Obscurity of Nature, the Difficulty of finding Truth, the Blindness of our Mind, and Impotency of our Reason? And should they be silent, yet Experience plainly would speak how difficult, if not impossible, it is to arrive unto any clear and sure Knowledge of these common Objects; seeing the most sedulous Inquiries, undertaken by the choicest Wits for above two Thousand Years, have scarce perhaps exhibited one unquestionable Theorem in Natural Philosophy, one unexceptionable Maxim of Ethical Prudence or Policy; all Things being still exposed to doubt and dispute, as they were of old, when first Admiration and Curiosity did prompt Men to hunt after the Causes of Things; the most however that after all our care and toil we can perceive doth not exceed some faint Colours, some superficial Figures, some gross Effects of Things, while their radical Properties, and their immediate Causes remain enveloped, and debarred from our sight in unaccessible Darkness. Shall we then, who cannot pierce into the Nature of a Pebble, that cannot apprehend how a Mushroom doth grow, that are baffled in our Philosophy about a Gnat, or a Worm, debate and decide (beyond what is taught us from above) concerning the precise manner of Divine

Καὶ οὐ σοὶ τὸ  
φιλότιμον ἐν  
ἀκρίδοις.  
Greg. Naz.  
Or. 26.

Βρωμαῖα ἰδοῦ, τὸ ὅπως μελίζονται  
εἰς φλέμα, εἰς αἷμα, εἰς χυμὸν, εἰς  
χολῶν, ἀγνοῶ· ταῦτα ἅπερ βλέπομεν  
καθ' ἡμέραν ἰδοῦντες ἀγνοοῦμεν,  
καὶ τὴν φύσιν τῆς θεᾶς πολυπραγμονοῦμεν;  
Chryl. Περὶ ἀκατάληπτου. α.

\* Arist. Met. 2. 1.

Sap. 9. 13.

Ecclef. 7. 23.

Job 11. 7.

the farthest Recesses of Infinity? Hardly (saith the Wisdom of Solomon) do we guess aright of Things upon the Earth, and with labour do we find the Things that are before us; but the Things that are in Heaven, who hath searched out? Yea, and the genuine Solomon himself, I said, I will be wise, but it was far from me; that which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out? What is more remote, what more profound, than God's Nature, who then can find it out? Sooner with our Hands may we touch the extreme Surface of the Skies, sooner with our Eyes may we pierce to the Center of the Earth: So it is expressly told to us in Job; Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to Perfection? It is as high as Heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than Hell, what canst thou know?

4. It may be considered, that we daily see and observe Things, which, did not manifest Experience convince us of their Being, we should be apt to disbelieve their Possibility; Sense no less than Faith doth present us with Objects, to bare Reason improbable and unconceivable; so that should we attend to the Scruples injected thereby, we should hardly take Things for possible, which we behold existent;



issent; we should distrust the greatest Evidence of Sense, and by our Logick put out our Eyes. Who would believe, that, did he not every Day see it; who can conceive how, although he seeth it, from a little, dry, ill-favoured, insipid Seed thrown into the Earth, there shortly would rise so goodly a Plant, endowed with so exact Figure, so fragrant Smell, so delicate Taste, so lively Colour; by what Engines it attracteth, by what Discretion it culleth out, by what Hands it mouldeth its proper Aliment; by what Artifice it doth elaborate the same so curiously, and incorporate it with it self? What Virtue could we imagine in Nature able to digest an earthy Juice into the pellucid clearness of Chrystal, into the invincible firmness of a Diamond? Who would not be an Infidel, did not his Sight assure him of the Miracles achieved by that blind plastick force, which without Eye or Hand doth frame such varieties of exquisite Workmanship, inimitable, and far surpassing the skill of the greatest Artist? That a little Star, from so vast a Distance, in a Moment, should make Impression on our Eyes, replenishing with its Light or Image so spacious a Region all about it, were we blind we should hardly believe, we scarce could fancy; How, without knowing the Organs of Speech, or the manner of applying them, without any Care or Pain employed by us, we so conform our Voice, as to express what Word, what Accent we please; how we do this, or that we can do it, as it will confound our Thought to imagine, so it would stagger our Faith to believe, did not our Conscience persuade us that we can, and do speak. It is upon Occasion very commonly said, I should never have believed it, had I not seen it; and that Men speak so in earnest, many such Instances declare. Now if we can give Credit to our Sense against the Suffrage or Scruple of our Reason in Things not so distanced from our Capacity of Knowledge, shall we not much more yield our Belief unto God's express Word in Things so infinitely distant from it? If common Experience can subdue our Judgments, and compel us to a belief of Things incredible, shall our Reason demur at submitting to Divine Authority? If the Dictate of our Conscience doth convince us, shall not we much more surrender to the Testimony of God, who is *greater than our Conscience, and knoweth all Things*? If we do believe, because we seem to know by seeing our selves; we should rather believe, because we surely know by hearing from God: For Sense may deceive us, and often needeth Correction from Reason; God cannot deceive, and Reason often is by him corrected: Which leadeth me to a farther Consideration, That

1 John 3. 20.

5. The Propositions clearly delivered unto us by God himself, are upon many Accounts more unquestionably true, more credible than the Experiments of any Sense, or Principles of any Science: Whence if there happen to arise any seeming Contest between these, a Precedence is due to the former, in derogation to the latter; it is fit that we rather give our Eyes and our Ears, our Fancies and our Reasons the Lie, than any wise, by Diffidence to his Word, put an Affront on God; (for to disbelieve him, is, as St. John telleth us, to give him the Lie.) *ὁ μὲν τὸ θεῶν, τὸ δὲ ἀνθρώπων, τὸ φησὶν ὁ θεὸς, τὸ φησὶν ὁ ἀνθρώπος, ὁ θεὸς ἀληθεύει, ὁ ἀνθρώπος ψεύδεται*, the Folly of God (as St. Paul speaketh; that is, the Points of Faith declared by God, which seem most irrational, and cross to the Decrees of Human Wisdom) is *σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ, ἡ σοφία τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἡ σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ ὑπερβαίνει τὴν σοφίαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων*, wiser than Men, that is, more assuredly consonant to real Truth, than our most undoubted Theorems of Science, and most current Maxims of Policy. God is the *Father of all Lights*, both of that which immediately shineth from Heaven, and of that which glimmereth here below; he is the Fountain of all Truth, whether natural or supernatural: But his Light and his Truth he conveyeth into us by manners different; some Light streameth directly from him, other cometh obliquely, being refracted through divers *Mediums*, or reflected from several Objects upon us; the first Sort must needs be more bright, and more pure, should be more powerful and efficacious upon our Minds: The latter is often blended with material Tinctures, is weakened by the Interruptions it meeteth with, loseth of its Purity and its Force by the many Conduits it passeth through, by the many Shades it mixeth with. Observations of Sense do often prove fallacious, and their not ever doing so, dependeth upon divers Conditions, a right Temper of the Organ, a fit Disposition of the *Medium*, a just Distance of the Object; so that Conclusions derived from them cannot be so absolutely certain, nor consequently the Principles grounded on them: But Divine Reve-

1 John 5. 10.

1 Cor. 1. 25.



Revelation is not obnoxious to such Conditions; as the Doctrines revealed are in themselves simply true, according to the highest Pitch of Necessity, because Supreme Wisdom doth conceive them, and Truth it self doth vent them; so the manner of declaring them must be competent, because God himself doth chuse, and use it; there plainly needeth no more, than yielding an attentive Ear, and Skill in the Language wherein they are expressed, to secure us from Error, and Uncertainty about them: So that well might St. Austin say, that in other things our Conjecture is exercised; but Faith alone doth assure our Mind.

Ad cetera ex  
creatur per  
fortale; at  
cum de rebus  
fidel agitur, ibi  
est certitudo sine  
fortis. Aug.

There have been those, you know, who have not only advanced Doubts concerning Propositions attested to by clearest Sense, and infer'd by strongest Discourse; but have by their argute Cavillations bid fair to shake the Foundations of all Human Sciences: But I never heard of any, who believed a God to be, that did contest the infallible Truth of his Oracles: *Socrates* we may be sure (his excellent Scholar assuring us) who was so incredulous, as to disclaim all Pretence to Wisdom or Science, being Author of the famous Saying, *Ἐγὼ τάνηκεν ἴσθαι*; yet greatly did rely upon Divine Significations, and Testimonies, so deemed by him, and such as he could come at; alledging, that he, who followed the Conduct of his own Reason, instead of God's Direction, chooseth a blind and ignorant Guide, before one that best seeth, and knoweth the Way: *He*, saith the \* Historian, *despised all Humane Counsel in respect of God's Advice.*

\* *Ἀπομνηστικόν.*

\* *Ἀντὶ τοῦ δὲ  
πρὸς τὸν ἀποστό-  
λου, ὡς ἐν τῇ  
ἐπιστολῇ τῇ πρὸς  
τὸν ῥωμ. 1. 2. 3.*  
Plal. 94. 9.

*He that formeth the Eye (saith the Psalmist) shall not be see? He that planteth the Ear, shall not be hear? He that teacheth Man Knowledge, shall not be know? He that indued us with all knowing Faculties, and presideth over us in the Management of them, shall not he supereminently know all that we can? Must not they in Reason continue subordinate to his Direction? Should they not always discern and judge under Correction by him, with an Appeal and Submission reserved to his better Judgment?*

I might adjoin, That the Object and the End (as well as the Author and the Manner) of Divine Revelation, doth argue it to surpass all Reason, and all Sense, in certainty and credibility; for Sense and Reason converse wholly, or chiefly about Objects material and mutable; Revelation about immaterial and immutable Things: They direct us in Affairs concerning this Transitory Life. This leadeth us toward Eternal Felicity; to mistake about those Objects, to miscarry in those Affairs, is in it self of little, in Comparison, of no Importance: But to judge rightly about these Things, to tread safely in these Paths, is of infinitely vast Concernment; a smaller Competency therefore of Light and Certainty, might well suffice to the Purposes of Reason and Sense, but to Faith the greatest degree of Assurance is worthily due, and seemeth requisite. But farther,

John 3. 9.

6. Not only the Consideration of this Mystery, but of all the Divine Attributes, will in like manner extort from our feeble Reason the Question of *Nicodemus*, *How can these Things be?* They will all of them equally puzzle our shallow Imagination, and baffle our slender Understanding: For who can imagine, or understand how God's Immensity doth consist with his perfect Simplicity; or that without any Parts he doth co-exist to all possible Extension of Matter; being all here, and wholly there, and immensely every where? Who can apprehend his Indivisible Eternity, or how all Successions of Time are ever present to him, and subject to his View; so that he is not older now than he was when the World began, nor younger than he will be after innumerable Ages are past; so that he foreseeth the most contingent Events, depending upon Causes in their Nature arbitrary and indeterminate? Who can fancy, how out of mere Nothing, or out of extreme Confusion and Indisposedness the World could be created, and framed into so goodly Order, by a mere act of Will, or by the bare speaking of a Word? How without any Distraction of Thought he governeth Affairs, attending to the infinite Varieties of Thoughts, Words, and Actions occurring here; and *ita curans universos tanquam singulos, ita singulos tanquam solos*, as St. Austin speaketh? How he is truly said to resolve and to reverse, to love and hate, to be pleased and grieved, all without any real Change, or shadow of alteration? How he suffereth many Things to happen, which extremely displease him, and which he can easily hinder; and doth not effect many Things, which are much desired by him

Confess. 3. 11.



him, and very feasible to his Power? Why to equal Men he distributeth his Gifts so unequally; affording to divers abundant Means of becoming Happy, leaving others destitute of them? What Wit of Man can reconcile his infinite Benignity with his most severe Decrees; or compose the seeming Differences between his Mercy and his Justice? Many such Perfections and Dispensations of God we must stedfastly believe, because they are plainly taught in Scripture; to distrust them being to renounce Christianity; to deny them being to raze up the very Foundations of our Religion: Yet he that shall with his utmost Attention of Mind endeavour to conceive how they can be, or how they consist together, according to our ordinary Notions of Things, and the vulgar Meaning of Words, applied by us to these inferiour Matters, shall find himself graverled with innumerable semblances of Contradiction, plung'd in Depths inscrutable, involved in Labyrinths inextricable.

What in Palestine the Cross of Christ was, a scandal to Jews (Men dull, but obstinate, and invincibly possessed by vain Prejudices) and folly to Greeks (Men of Wit and Subtily, but overweeningly conceited of them) that in Speculation may a great Part of Divine Truths be apt to stumble froward and arrogant Men; but as there, so here, blessed are they who are not scandalized; whom no fond Scruple, or haughty Conceit can pervert from readily embracing all necessary Verities; such are those we pointed at, which if without extreme Folly and Impiety we cannot reject, or be diffident of, altho' surmounting our Conceit, and dazzling our Reason; then upon the same Account, with like Facility, we must submit our Faith to the Doctrines concerning the Blessed Trinity, standing upon the same Authority.

Πάντες ἴσιν τὸ θεῖον Μυστήριον ἀμείβεσθαι, καὶ πολλοὶ μὲν ἀσεβήτως διαλέγεσθαι, τὰ δὲ θεῖα καὶ δαιμόνια μυστήρια διασκοπεῖν ἀνθρώπων οὐκ ἔστιν, οἱ δὲ ἀτυχέως τεχνιτῶν διανοοῦντες διὰ δόξης καὶ διανοίας καὶ τὸ εἶδον μάλιστα. Plut. de sera num. vind.

7. Lastly, We may consider and meditate upon the total Incomprehensibility of God in all things belonging to him; in his Nature, his Attributes, his Decrees, his Works and Ways; which all are full of Depth, Mystery, and Wonder. God inhabiteth quies ἀπόρρητον, a light inaccessible to the dim and weak Sight of mortal Eyes; which no man hath seen, or can see: No man (as he told his Servant Moses) can see his face (the very exterior appearance of him) and live: He is a consuming fire, that will scorch, and devour such as by rash Inquiries approach too near him; the sight 'tis said of the glory of the Lord, was like devouring fire in the sight of the children of Israel. Even those spiritual Eagles, the quick and strong sighted Seraphims, are obliged to cover their faces, as not daring to look upon, nor able to sustain the Fulgour of his immediate Presence, the Flashes of Glory and Majesty issuing from his Throne: And the most illuminate Secretaries of Heaven, unto whom Secrets were disclosed, into which Angels themselves were ambitious to pry, were sometimes nonpluss'd in Contemplation of God's Attributes and Actions; being in their Astonishment forced to cry out, ὦ βάθος. O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! Even his Methods of exterior Providence are inscrutably Mysterious; his judgments are ἀνεξερεύνητα, like inexhaustible Mines, to the Bottom whereof we cannot any wise dig by our Inquiry; his paths are ἀνεξιχνίαστοι, so obscure as not to be traced by any Footsteps of our Discourse; his gifts are ἀνεκδιήγητοι, not to be interpreted, or expressed by our Language. And if all concerning God be thus incomprehensible, why should any thing seem incredible? Why out of so many unconceivable Mysteries do we chuse some, reprobate others? Wherefore do we stretch our Judgment beyond its limits to things so infinitely exceeding it? Why do we suffer our Reason to be pragmatistical, unjustly invading the Office not belonging thereto; intruding into things which it hath not seen, nor can comprehend; those secret things which belong to the Lord our God, and the Comprehension whereof he hath reserved unto himself?

Εἰ δὲ αἱ ἀνομοματῆς ἀκατάληκτοι, πολλὰ καὶ μάλιστα τὰς. Chryl. 1 Tim. 6. 16. Exod. 33. 20. Deut. 4. 24. Exod. 24. 17. Scrutator machinatur gloria. Aug. Isa. 6. 2. 1 Pet. 1. 12. Rom. 11. 33.

Τὸ πρὸς θεῶν ἀντίπασαι πρὸς ὧν; τί καὶ σὺ μετὰ τῇ χειρὶ τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ τὸ πρὸς σπινθῆρ, καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν δεῦν; Greg. Naz. Or. 26. 2 Cor. 9. 15.

Δόξα ἴσιν ἀχράντητον, μέγιστον ἀκατάληκτον, ὅψιν ἀφάνιστον, σοφίαν ἀσυμμέτρην, ἀγαθωσύνην ἀμέμικτον, καλοποιῶν ἀνεκδιήγητον. Theoph. ad Autol.

Col. 2. 18. Deut. 29. 29.

These Considerations may suffice in some Manner to shew, that \*St. Chrysostom had reason to exclaim so much against the madness, as he stileth it, of those, who do πολυπραγμενεῖν τὴν νοῖαν τῷ θεῷ, are busily curious in speculation about the Essence of

\* Μάταιον δὲ ἔργον ἐστὶν ἐξαπλῶ φημι φιλοσοφεῖν εἰδέναι τι τῶ θεοῦ. Chryl. περὶ ἀκατάληκτου θεοῦ.



*Cogitemus si valeamus, si non valeamus credamus.* Aug. *Serm.* 5. *de Temp.*

*Τὸ εἶναι τοιαύτην ὁμολογίαν ἀπολύτως ἀδελφίστην ἐστὶν ἀδελφικῆς ἀγάπης, καὶ οὐκ ἀδελφικῆς ἀγάπης ἀπὸ τοῦ ὅτι ἀδελφικὴ ἀγάπη ἐστὶν ἀδελφικὴ ἀγάπη; Achan.*

*T. 1. 625.*

*+ Zeno Veronens.*

may earlier incur

*Σαφὲς ἔλεγχος ἀριστίας τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου. Expos. fid. apud Just. M.*

*Rom.* 12. 3.

*1 Cor.* 4. 6.

*1 Pet.* 2. 2.  
*ἡμετέροις.*

*Job* 40. 4.

God; daring, *οὐκ ἐπιεικὲς ἀποδιδόναι λόγους*, to subject Divine Mysteries to their own Ratiocinations: That St. Basil's Advice was wholesome, *μὴ μεμψυζῆσαι τὰ ὁσιώτατα*, not to be meddling about things, about which Holy Scripture is silent: That + another ancient Writer did say no less truly, than prettily, that in these Matters *Curiositas reum facit, non peritum*; we of the Fathers do with great Wisdom dislike and dissuade the searching *καὶ τὴν* the Manner of Things being true, or possible, as a suspicious Mark, or a dangerous Motive of Infidelity: That St. Paul's Rules, *φρονεῖν οὕτως ὡς οὐκ ὁρατεῖν*, to be wise so as not to be sober, and modest; and *μὴ φρονεῖν ὡς ὁ γινώσκων*, not to conceit any thing without warrant of Scripture; are in this

Case most especially to be heeded: That, according to St. Peter's Admonition, we should, as new born babes (unprepossessed with any Notions or Fancies of our own) long for, and greedily suck in the sincere milk of the word; not diluting it with baser Liquors of human Device: That where God doth interpose his definitive Sentence, our Reason hath nothing to do but to attend and submit; no right to vote, no licence to debate the Matter; its Duty is to listen and approve whatever God speaketh, to read and subscribe to whatever he writeth; at least in any Case it should be mute, or ready to follow Job, saying, Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. In fine, The Testimony of God, with a sufficient Clearness represented to the Capacity of an honest and docile Mind (void of all partial Respects, and clear from all sorts of prejudice; loving Truth, and forward to entertain it; abhorring to wrest or wrack things, to use any Fraud or Violence upon any Principle, or ground of Truth) the Testimony of God, I say, so revealed, whatever exception our shallow Reason can thrust in, should absolutely convince our Judgments, and constrain our Faith. If the Holy Scripture teacheth us plainly, and frequently doth inculcate upon us (that which also the uniform Course of Nature, and the peaceable Government of the World doth also speak) that there is but One True God; if it as manifestly doth ascribe to the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity the same August Names, the same Peculiar Characters, the same Divine Attributes (essential to the Deity) the same superlatively admirable Operations of Creation and Providence; if it also doth prescribe to them the same supreme Honours, Services, Praises and Acknowledgments to be paid unto them all; this may be abundantly enough to satisfy our Minds, to stop our Mouths, to smother all Doubt and Dispute about this High and Holy Mystery. It was exceeding Goodness in God, that he would condescend so far to instruct us, to disclose so noble a Truth unto us, to enrich our Minds with that *τὸ ἀπερὶστον καὶ ὑψίστου*, that most excellent knowledge of himself; and it would be no small Ingratitude and Unworthiness in us any-wise to suspect his Word, or pervert his Meaning; any-wise to subject his Venerable Oracles to our rude Canvasses and Cavils. In fine, The proper Employment of our Mind about these Mysteries, is not to search and speculate about them, to discourse flippantly and boldly about them; but with a pious Credulity to embrace them, with all humble Respect to adore them.

I have thus endeavoured in some Measure to defend the Outworks of the Orthodox Doctrine concerning the Blessed Trinity; it was beside my intent to insist so long thereon, but the Matter did *ἐπιλυνταί*, was so attractive, that I could not wave shewing my Respect thereto.

I proceed now to that which I principally designed, the proposing briefly some practical Considerations, apt to excite us to the exercising our Understanding and Affections upon those wonderful Dispensations of Grace and Mercy, vouchsafed to us by the Holy Trinity, either conjunctly, or (as they *κατ' οἰκονομίαν* are expressed) separately.

We first should carefully Study, and duly be affected with that gracious Consent, and (as it were) Confederacy of the Glorious Three in designing and prosecuting our Good; their unanimous Agreement in uttering those three mighty Words of Favour to Mankind, *Faciamus, Redimamus, Salvemus*, Let us make Man out



out of nothing, let us recover him from Sin and Perdition, let us Crown him with Joy and Salvation; we should with grateful Resentments, observe them conspiring to employ their Wisdom in contriving fit Means and Methods to exert their Power in effectual Accomplishment of what was requisite to the promoting of our Welfare, the Rescue of us from all Misery, the Advancing us to the highest Degree of Dignity, and Instating us in the most perfect Condition of Happiness of which our Nature is capable; in Prosecution of that gracious Design, which their joint Goodness had projected for us. More distinctly,

1. We should set our Mind on God the Father, before the Foundation of the World from all Eternity, pleasing to forecast with himself the Creation of us, and Communication of his own Image to us; endowing us with most excellent Faculties of Body and Soul; subjecting the visible World to our Use and Governance; placing us in a State of great Accommodation and Delight; permitting us to fall, that he might raise us to a higher and better Condition, resolving to send his own dear Son from his Bosom to procure and purchase the Redemption of Mankind; preparing and disposing the World for the Reception of so great a Mercy, by a general Testification of his Patience and Beneficence (*giving showers and fruitful seasons, and filling the hearts of men with food and gladness*) but more especially by prophetic Promises, Predictions, and Prefigurations; also suffering the generality of Mankind so to proceed in its ways, as might render it sensible of its Error and Unhappiness, of the Need and Benefit of a Deliverance; then in the fulness of time, when the creature did earnestly groan, and long for its recovery from vanity and slavery, actually sending his only Son, and cloathing him with human Flesh, that conversing with us, he might discover to us his gracious Intentions toward us, might confirm the Truth thereof by Miraculous Works, might instruct us by his Heavenly Doctrine and Holy Life in our Duty, and the Terms of our Salvation; then freely delivering him over unto Death, and accepting his Passion as a Sacrifice expiating our Sins, and meriting his Favour toward us: Then raising him as the first fruits from the Dead, setting him at his right Hand, investing him with Authority to Govern and Save those who sincerely would believe in him, and faithfully obey him; also sending and bestowing his Holy Spirit to dwell in them, to conduct, confirm, and comfort them in the Ways of Truth and Righteousness. These, with manifold other intercurrent Passages of gracious Providence ascribed to God the Father, we should seriously mind, and so resent, as to be ravished with Admiration of his Mercy; to be enflamed with love of his Goodness; to be possessed with gratitude toward him; to become thoroughly devoted to his Service.

2. We should likewise mind the Blessed Son of GOD concurring with his Father in all his Purposes of Love and Mercy toward us, in making all Things, and sustaining them by the Word of his Power; but especially in his (toward the freeing us from the desperate Miseries, Corruptions, and Slaveries, into which we were plunged) assuming Human Nature, leading therein a troublesome and toilsome Life, for our Benefit and Instruction; undergoing a bitter and shameful Death, for the Atonement of our Sins, and Reconciliation of us to Divine Favour; purchasing great and precious Promises, procuring high and glorious Privileges for us; ascending into Heaven to prepare us Mansions of Bliss; interceding for us with God, and pouring from above manifold Blessings upon us: The astonishing Miracles of Goodness, of Wisdom, of Condescension and Patience, displayed in the Management of which Undertakings for us, what Heart can well conceive, what Tongue can utter? What Amazement should it produce in us to consider the brightest efflux of Divine Glory eclipsing and shrowding it self under so dark a Cloud of Mortal Frailty; the most High stooping into the quality of so mean a Creature; the First-born, and Heir Apparent of Heaven, descending from his Throne of Eternal Majesty, and voluntarily degrading himself into the Form of a Servant, clad in Rags, worn with Labour and Travel, exposed to Contempt and Disgrace? To reflect upon the great Creator and Sovereign Lord of all the World, who reared the Heavens, and founded the Earth, who possesseth and upholdeth all Things, needing himself a Shelter, pinched with Want, taking Alms from his Slaves, and paying Tribute to his Subjects; to contemplate the Son of God,



willingly stiling himself the Son of Man, really subjecting himself to the Duties, the Necessities, the Infirmities of Human Nature; suffering the coarsest Hardships, and extremest Disasters thereof; all this upon free Choice, with full Contentment, and perfect Submission to so mean and so distastful a Condition.

We may observe with how admirable Goodness he did vouchsafe to converse with a froward Generation of Men, to instruct a stupid and indocile sort of People, with all Sorts of Beneficence, to oblige an Incredulous, Insensible, and Ingrateful Crew, with how invincible a Meekness and Patience he endured the Contradiction of Sinners; the scornful Reproaches, the wrongful Calumnies, the spiteful and cruel Usages of the envious and malicious World; being to the highest Extremity despised, hated, maligned, and abused by those whom he had most highly honoured, most affectionately loved, and conferred the greatest Favours upon. We may with Astonishment contemplate that strange Contest between Divine Patience, and Human Wickedness, striving which of them should excel; when we do peruse and weigh those enigmatical Passages, God accused by Man of Blasphemy, the Eternal Wisdom aspersed with Folly, Truth itself impeached of Imposture, essential Love made guilty of Mischief, and supreme Goodness stiled a Malefactor; Infinite Power beat down, and trampled upon by Impotent Malice; the Judge of all the World, the Fountain of all Authority and Right, arraigned, condemned, and executed for Injustice; the desire of all Nations rejected by his own Country and Kindred; the Joy of Paradise (whose lightsome Countenance doth cheer Heaven it self) almost overwhelmed with Grief, uttering lamentable Groans, tortured with grievous Agonies; the very Heart of God bleeding, and the sole Author of Life expiring.

We may farther study Jesus, with a hearty Compassion, and Tears gushing from his inmost Bowels, pitying not these his own Sufferings, but for the Vengeance for them due and decreed unto his Persecutors; we would mark him excusing their Fault, and praying for their Pardon; dying willingly for their Good, when he died violently by their Hand; passionately desiring their Salvation, when they maliciously procured his Destruction.

We should mind all the Actions of the Son of GOD, our Saviour, with the most wise Grounds, endearing Circumstances, and precious Fruits of them; his Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, Intercession; as containing Instances of the greatest Charity and Humility possibly shewed unto us, as Arguments of the greatest Love and Gratitude due from us: Mind them we should most seriously, so as to be heartily affected with them, so as to esteem worthily the transcendent Honour done us by God assuming our Nature, and exalting us to a Conjunction with the Divine Nature; so as to be deeply sensible of our Obligation to so immense a Charity, that could do and suffer so much for us, without any Desert of ours, yea, notwithstanding our exceedingly bad Deserts, our rebellions and Hostilities against him; so as to detest the Heinousness of our Sins, that needed so mighty an Expiation, that caused so horrid a Tragedy; so as not to neglect so great Salvation so frankly offered, so dearly purchased for us; not to frustrate the Designs of so unconceivable Love and Goodness, so as to obey readily so gracious a Master, to follow carefully so admirable an Example; so as in imitation of him, and for his Sake, to be meek, and humble in Heart, and in Deed, seeing he did so infinitely condescend and abase himself for us; to be patient and submissive to his Will, who stooped so low, and suffered so much for us; so as to bear a general Affection to Mankind, grounded like his, not upon any particular Interests, nor limited by any partial Respects, but extended freely, in real Desire and Intention, toward all; liberally to impart the good Things we possess, and patiently to brook the Crosses we meet with, and heartily to forgive the Offences done to us; for that he freely did part with the greatest Glories of Eternity, with the highest Dignities, and the richest Treasures of Heaven for our Sake; when we were *Enemies in our Minds by wicked Works, dead in Trespasses and Sins*, guilty of numberless grievous Offences against him, by his Blood redeeming us from Wrath, reconciling us to the Mercy and Favour of God.

3. We should also meditate upon the Blessed Spirit of God, with equal Goodness conspiring, and co-operating with all the Purposes, to all the Effects of Grace, which conduce to our everlasting Happiness; more especially as the Repairer of our



our decayed Frames, the Enlivener of our dead Souls, the Infuser of spiritual Light into our dark Minds, the Kindler of spiritual Warmth into our cold Hearts; the Raiser of spiritual Appetite to Righteousness, and the Relish of Goodness in our stupid Senses; the Imparter of spiritual Strength and Vigour to our feeble Powers; the Author of all Liberty, loosing us from Captivity under the Tyranny of Satan, from Vassalage unto our own Carnal Lusts and Passions; from Subjection to a hard and imperious Law, from Bondage to the Terrors of a guilty Conscience: As him, that enableth us to perform the Duties, and accomplish the Conditions required of us in order to our Salvation, that qualifyeth us to be the Sons of God by his effectual Grace, and assureth us that we are so by his comfortable Testimony: as our sure Guide in the ways of Truth and Virtue; our faithful Counsellor in all Doubts and Darkneses; our mighty Support and Succour in all Needs, in all Distresses; our ready Guard against all Assaults and Temptations; our sweet Comforter in all Sadnesses and Afflictions: Who doth insinuate good Thoughts, doth kindle holy Desires, doth cherish pious Resolutions, doth further honest Endeavours in us: Who only doth inflame our Hearts with Devotion toward God; doth encourage, doth enable us to approach unto him; doth prompt us with fit Matter of Request, and becometh Advocate for the good Success of our Prayers.

We should mind him as the Root of all good Fruits growing in us, or sprouting from us; the Producer of all good Habits formed in us, the Assister of all good Works performed by us; the Spring of all true Content that we enjoy; to whom our embracing the Faith, our continuing in Hope, our working in Charity, the Purification of our Hearts, the Mortification of our Lusts, the Sanctification of our Lives, the Salvation of our Souls are principally due, are most justly ascribed: As the Author and Preserver of so inestimable Benefits unto us, let us mind him; and withal let us consider him as condescending to be a loving Friend and constant Guest to so mean and unworthy Creatures; vouchsafing to attend over us, to converse with us, to dwell in us, rendring our Souls holy Temples of his Divinity, Royal Thrones of his Majesty, bright Orbs of his heavenly Light, pleasant Paradises of his blissful Presence; our Souls, which naturally are profane Receptracles of wicked and impure Affections, dark Cells of false and fond Imaginations, close Prisons of black and sad Thoughts: As graciously *striving with us*, striving to open and enter into our Hearts, barr'd against him by vain Conceits, and vicious Inclinations; striving to reclaim us from the Sins and Errors into which we are wont heedlessly or wilfully to precipitate our selves; striving to make us, what in all Duty and Wisdom we should be, capable of divine Favour, and fit for Everlasting Happiness: As enduring patiently manifold Displeasures and Disrespects from us; our rude Oppositions against him, our frequent Neglects of his kind Admonitions; our many perverse Humours, wanton Freaks, wilful Miscarriages, and unworthy Dealings toward him.

We should thus mind the Blessed Spirit of GOD, and be suitably affected toward him; so as to be duly sensible and thankful for those unexpressible Gifts and Blessings indulged to us by him, so as to render all Love and Reverence, all Praise and Glory, all Obedience and Service to him, especially so as to admit him cheerfully into our Hearts; yea, invite him thither by our earnest Prayers; to make fit Preparations for his Reception and Entertainment (by cleansing our Hearts from all loathsome Impurities) to make him welcome, and treat him kindly, with all civil Respect, with all humble Observance; not *grieving* and vexing him by our distastful Crossness and Peevishness, not tempting him by our fond Presumption, or base Treachery; not extinguishing his heavenly Light, and holy Fire by our foul Lusts, our damp Stupidities, our cold Neglects, our Neglects to foment and nourish them by the Food of devout Meditations and zealous Desires: So let us mind him, as to admit gladly his gentle Illapses, to delight in his most pleasant Society, to hearken to his faithful Suggestions, to comply with all his kindly Motions, to behave our selves modestly, consistently, and officiously toward him.

Thus



Thus should we employ our Mind, all the Faculties of our Soul, our Understanding, our Will, our Affections upon the Blessed Trinity, the Supreme of all Things above, the Founder of that Celestial Society, unto which as Christians we are infered; the Sovereign of that Heavenly Kingdom of which we are Subjects; the Fountain of all the Good and Happiness we can hope for in that superior State. To the Performance of which Duty there be Arguments and Inducements innumerable; 'tis the most proper and connatural Object of our Mind, that for which it is fittest, and for which it was designed; the best Intelligible, and infinitely most Amiable of all Things. 'Tis the most worthy and noble Object, the Contemplation of which, and Affection whereto, will most elevate, most enrich, most adorn, most enlarge the Capacities, and most satisfy the Appetites of our Souls. 'Tis the most sweet and pleasant Object, wherein all Light, all Beauty, all Perfection do shine; the Sight and Love of which do constitute Paradise, and beatify Heaven it self. 'Tis the most useful and beneficial Object of our Mind, which will best instruct us in what it concerneth us to know, will most incite us to those Duties which we are obliged to perform, will be most efficacious to the begetting in us those Dispositions, which are indispensibly requisite for the Attainment, and for the Enjoyment of that Everlasting Bliss; unto which that One Blessed Unity, and Glorious Trinity in its infinite Mercy bring us all; To whom be all Glory, Honour and Praise for ever. *Amen.*



**FINIS.**



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